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THE

THEOLOGICAL

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

BOYLE LECTURES.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY S. COLLINGWOOD, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY,

FOR JOHN HENRY PARKER;

AND J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,

AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF

INFIDELITY,

WITH A REFUTATION OF ITS PRINCIPLES AND REASONINGS:

IN A SERIES OF

SERMONS

PREACHED FOR THE LECTURE

FOUNDED BY THE HON. ROBERT BOYLE,

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST. MARY LE BOW, LONDON,

FROM THE YEAR 1802 TO 1805.

BY THE RIGHT REV.

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

FIFTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY T. COMBE, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY,

FOR JOHN HENRY PARKER,

AND SOLD BY J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXIX.

TO THE

MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

CHARLES,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE,

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND,

AND

METROPOLITAN.

My Lord,

The Zeal, the Judgment, and the Ability, which your Grace has exerted in opposition to designs plausible perhaps in their pretences, but fraught with danger to our venerable Establishment, (an Establishment, the importance of which to the preservation of what yet remains of pure Religion in the world becomes daily more and more apparent,) naturally direct our eyes to your Grace as the most proper Patron of *a general Defence of Christianity* against its numerous enemies; whilst they tend to strengthen our confidence

in that good Providence, which, having hitherto protected the Church under many difficulties, still continues to raise up for its support, in times the most critical, Persons eminently qualified to fill its highest Stations, and to guard its Interests with Vigilance and Firmness.

Indebted, my Lord, to our late excellent Primate, among many other marks of kindness, for his recommendation to the Appointment which gave occasion to the following Work, it is peculiarly gratifying to me, to have your GRACE's permission to introduce it to the public with all the advantage that can be derived from the most dignified Patronage.

Could I presume to hope that it is in any degree worthy of the Honour which your GRACE has condescended to confer upon it, I should be relieved from all apprehensions as to its reception among those who are best qualified to judge of its merits. But, imperfect as I am sensible it must be, I trust that an attempt to revive the spirit of an Institution, which, in times past, has proved eminently serviceable to the Cause of True

Religion, will be regarded by your GRACE with a favourable eye; and that the importance of the design will be allowed to plead for some indulgence to the defects of the execution.

I am, with sentiments of the profoundest Respect and Duty,

My Lord,

Your GRACE's

most obliged and

obedient Servant,

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT.

July 15, 1806.

EXTRACT

FROM

A CODICIL TO THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE

HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE, ESQ.

Dated July 28, 1691.

"WHEREAS I have an intention to settle in my lifetime the sum of Fifty Pounds per Annum for ever, or at least for a considerable number of years, to be for an annual Salary for some learned Divine or preaching Minister from time to time to be elected and resident within the City of London or Circuit of the Bills of Mortality, who shall be enjoined to perform the Offices following; viz. to preach Eight Sermons in the year, for proving the Christian Religion against notorious Infidels, viz. Atheists, Theists, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans, not descending lower to any Controversies that are among Christians themselves—these Lectures to be on the first Monday of the respective Months of January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November, in such Church as my Trustees herein-named shall from time to time appoint—to be assisting to all

Companies and encouraging of them in any undertaking for propagating the Christian Religion in Foreign parts—to be ready to satisfy such real scruples as any may have concerning these matters, and to answer such new objections and difficulties as may be started, to which good answers have not yet been made . . . . . I will that after my death Sir John Rotherham Sergeant at Law, Sir Henry Ashhurst of London Knight and Baronet, Thomas Tennison Doctor in Divinity, and John Evelyn Sen. Esq. and the Survivors or Survivor of them, and such person or persons as the Survivor of them shall appoint to succeed in the following Trust, shall have the election and nomination of such Lecturer, and also shall and may constitute and appoint him for any term not exceeding three years, and at the end of such term shall make a new election and appointment of the same or any other learned Minister of the Gospel residing within the City of London or extent of the Bills of Mortality, at their discretions."

PREFACE.

More than a Century has now elapsed, since the foundation of Mr. Boyle's Lecture: and it is gratifying to reflect on the substantial benefit which appears to have arisen from it to the cause of Revealed Religion. Mr. Boyle lived in an age abounding with open and declared Infidels, men of active spirit, and indefatigable in their exertions to build up a system of Libertinism on the ruins of Christianity. He saw, that to stem the torrent of impiety, it was necessary to call in the joint efforts of the friends of truth:—and as the seeds of error had been widely scattered, he was careful to provide the means of destroying those pernicious fruits which, in after-times, they might be expected to produce. With that zeal, therefore, for the honour of God and the best interests of man, which on every occasion marked the character of this exemplary and truly illustrious person, he laid the foundation of a plan cal-

culated to meet future no less than present exigencies, and to supply an effectual antidote for that which might otherwise become an increasing and irremediable evil.

During a course of nearly fifty years, the publication of the Discourses preached for this Lecture was continued with little intermission; and such was the accumulation of these labours, that in the year 1739 they were collected into three large folio Volumes, comprising a most valuable body of Divinity. Since that period, although it appears that the Lecture has been constantly preached, few only of its productions have been submitted to the public eye; but among them are some of distinguished excellence. The last of these was published in the year 1783.

A desire to revive an attention to this eminently useful Institution, has been one motive for hazarding the publication of the present Volumes. Although the Founder of the Lecture did not expressly direct that the Discourses should be printed, yet as the design of it could not otherwise be effectually answered, it is hardly to be doubted that such was his intention: and since in these days of

licentiousness and irreligion, they that hate the Truth "are many in number," this is surely not a time to be backward in shewing our attachment to its cause.

Many persons have indeed regretted that this and some other Institutions of a similar kind have been suffered to become almost extinct. If they were only of a *temporary* nature, or were calculated to revive old and fruitless controversies, which might otherwise cease to disturb and perplex mankind, their discontinuance would be matter of satisfaction rather than of concern. But since the reasons which gave birth to them still unhappily remain in full force; since Infidelity, Irreligion, and Error, in one shape or other, continue unceasingly to assail us; is there not the same occasion as heretofore, for calling upon the Advocates of our Faith to stand forth in its defence? That the present publication may induce others of more leisure and greater ability to engage in similar undertakings, is an object which the Author has much at heart.

Respecting the Work itself, the design of it is sufficiently explained in the introductory

Lecture. As to the execution, it would little avail to offer any thing, by way of deprecating the severity of criticism. In a plan of such extent, embracing a great variety of topics, and touching upon many points, which even among the most learned and judicious are still considered as admitting of some dispute, the candid reader will hardly expect to derive from every part of the inquiry an equal degree of satisfaction, or to find, throughout, an entire coincidence with his own sentiments. The Author has only to say, that he is not conscious of having stated any *facts*, for which he cannot adduce the best *authorities;* or of having hazarded any *opinions*, which he could not support, if necessary, by a further weight of *argument*.

To enable the reader, in some measure, to judge of this for himself, a short Appendix is added to each Volume, containing references to some of the principal works which have been consulted. It was the Author's intention to have considerably enlarged these, by specifying more particularly the passages illustrative of what he has advanced; by giving Extracts from writings of great errarity or

value; and by adding some occasional Notes, relative to points only cursorily or incidentally touched upon in the body of the work. He regrets, however, that, writing amidst many interruptions and professional duties, he has been prevented from noting, at the time, so many *particular* references to the books which he has consulted, as might enable him (without again going through the same course of reading) to accomplish this part of his design, to the extent proposed. But it is hoped, that those which are here collected will be found sufficient to direct the studious and inquisitive reader to the most satisfactory channels of information, and to evince that the Author has not spared any necessary pains and diligence to make himself competently acquainted with his subject. —The credit of patience and perseverance, he trusts, will also be given him, for not having shrunk from the painful task of wading through volumes of ribaldry, profaneness, and impiety, no less disgusting to a well-principled mind, than dangerous to those who are ignorant of the Adversary's devices. No apology can be necessary for omitting to

specify several of these works, since they are such as every true Christian and real Philanthropist must wish to be, if possible, consigned for ever to oblivion.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

The publication of this Edition has been delayed, for a considerable length of time, from the Author's desire to render the work more generally useful by some additional notes and illustrations. Several persons, for whose judgment he entertains great respect and deference, having suggested that some points incidentally touched upon in the course of the work seemed to require further elucidation, and that the general mass of reading referred to in the Appendix to the former edition would hardly enable the student, without great labour and difficulty, successfully to pursue his inquiries; it has been endeavoured, in the present edition, to obviate this objection, by a greater number of specific references to the Authors that have been consulted, and by more frequent quotations

from scarce and valuable treatises. To attain this object, much of the Author's time has been occupied in retracing his former course of reading on the subject of each Lecture, and in noting or extracting, from writings of the best reputation, such passages as might tend to explain, or to confirm, what had been already advanced. It would have been easier to multiply annotations of this kind, than it was, in many instances, to refrain from extending this part of the work to a disproportionate magnitude. Occasion has also been taken to dilate upon some few topics, which could not be so fully considered in the body of the work, without digressing too far from the main subject; and to the whole has been added an *Index*, which, it is hoped, will be found sufficiently copious to enable the reader to refer with ease to any topic of importance.

Every attention of this kind which he could bestow, in order to render his book more useful, was due from the Author to the Public, in return for the very favourable reception which it has generally met with, and in particular for the strong testimonies

of approbation by which it has been honoured from persons of high authority and distinguished reputation in the Church.

To accommodate the purchasers of the former edition, a certain number of copies of the enlarged Appendix, together with the Index, have been separately worked off; and the corrections in the body of the work having been but few, and those chiefly verbal, it will be found that the several references correspond nearly, if not exactly, as to page and line, with the text of *both* editions.

Dec. 24, 1807.

The following List of those who have preached the Boyle's Lecture *since its first Institution, may be acceptable to the Theological Student. It is not quite complete: but the Author has been enabled to make it nearly so, by the obliging assistance of the Rev. Mr. Watts, Librarian of Sion College.*

1692. *Dr. Richard Bentley.* "A Confutation of Atheism." 4to. 1692.

1693. 1694. *Bishop Kidder.* "A Demonstration of the Messias." This forms a part of his larger work afterwards published under that title, fol.

1695. 1696. *Bishop Williams.* "On Divine Revelation." 8vo. 1708.

1697. *Bishop Gastrell.* "The Certainty and Necessity "of Religion in general." To this was afterwards added a second part on "the Certainty and Necessity of the Christian Revelation." 8vo. 1699.

1698. *Dr. J. Harris.* "A Refutation of the Atheistical "Objections against the Being and Attributes "of God." 4to. 1698.

1699. *Bishop Bradford.* "The Credibility of the Christian Revelation from its internal Evidence." 4to. 1700.

1700. *Bishop Blackall.* "The Sufficiency of a standing Revelation." 8vo. 1706.

1701. 1702. *Dr. Stanhope.* "The Truth and Excellency of "the Christian Religion asserted, against Jews, "Infidels, and Heretics." 4to. 1702.

1703. *Dr. Adams.* Not printed.

1704. } *Dr. Samuel Clarke.* "A Demonstration of the
1705. } "Being and Attributes of God:" and "A Dis-
"course concerning Natural and Revealed Re-
"ligion." 2 vols. 8vo.

1706. *Dr. John Hancock.* "Arguments to prove the
"Being of a God." 8vo. 1707.

1707. *William Whiston, M. A.* "The Accomplishment
"of Scripture Prophecies." 8vo. 1708.

1708. *Dr. John Turner.* "The Wisdom of God in the
"Redemption of Man." 8vo. 1709.

1709. *Dr. Lilly Butler.* "Religion no Matter of Shame."
8vo. 1711.

1710. *Dr. Josiah Woodward.* "The Divine Original
"and Excellence of the Christian Religion."
8vo. 1712.

1711. } *Dr. William Derham.* "Physico-Theology, or a
1712. } "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of
"God from his Works of Creation." 8vo. 1727.
best edition.

1713. } *Dr. Benjamin Ibbot.* "On the Exercise of pri-
1714. } vate Judgment or Free-Thinking." 8vo. 1727.

1715. } *Mr. Stonestreet.* Not printed. He died before
1716. } he finished the Course.

1717. } *Bishop Leng.* "Natural Obligations to believe
1718. } "the Principles of Religion and Divine Revela-
"tion." 8vo. 1719.

1719. } *Dr. John Clarke.* "An Enquiry into the Cause
1720. } "and Origin of Evil." 2 vols. 8vo. 1720.

1721. } *Archdeacon Gurdon.* "The pretended difficulties
1722. } "in Natural Religion no Excuse for Infidelity."
8vo. 1723.

1723. *Dr. Burscough.* Not printed.

1724. 1725. *Dr. Thomas Burnet.* "Demonstration of True "Religion." 2 vols. 8vo. 1726.

1726. 1727. 1728. *Dr. Denne*, afterwards Archdeacon of Rochester, See Masters's History of C. C. C. Cambridge, p. 277. Not printed.

1729. Unknown.

1730. 1731. 1732. *Dr. William Berriman.* "The gradual Revela- "tion of the Gospel, from the Time of Man's "Apostacy." 2 vols. 8vo. 1733.

N. B.—So far the Collection goes, which was published in 3 vols. folio, 1739. An Abridgement of them, with a copious Index, was previously published, by *Gilbert Burnet*, Vicar of Coggeshall, Essex, under the title of "A "Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion." in 4 vols. 8vo. 1737.

1733. 1734. 1735. Unknown.

1736. 1737. 1738. *Richard Biscoe, M. A.* "The History of the Acts "of the Holy Apostles confirmed from other "Authors, and considered as full Evidences of "the Truth of Christianity." 2 vols. 8vo. 1742.

1739. 1740. 1741. *Dr. Leonard Twells.* 2 vols. 8vo. 1743. [including his L. Moyer's Lecture.]

1742. 1743. *Dr. Thomas*, afterwards Bishop of Winchester. See Gent. Mag. 1781. p. 242. Not printed.

1744. 1745. *Dr. Joseph Roper.* Not printed. [In Sion College there are eleven MS. Sermons preached at Boyle's Lect. by Dr. Roper, Rector of St. Nicholas Cole-Abbey, given by Dr. Cobden, Archdeacon of London. He died before he finished the Course.]

1746. Unknown.

1747. 1748. 1749. *Dr. Henry Stebbing.* "Christianity justified upon "the Scripture Foundation, being a summary "View of the Controversy between Christians "and Deists." 8vo. 1750.

1750. 1751. 1752. *Dr. John Jortin.* The substance of a part of these Discourses was inserted in his "Remarks "on Ecclesiastical History." Vol. 1. and 2. [See his Note at the end of the 3d Book, vol. 2. p. 438. 2nd edit.]

1753. 1754. 1755. Unknown.

1756. 1757. 1758. *Bishop Newton.* "These form a part of his Dissertations on the Prophecies." [See his Introduction to the 2nd volume.]

1759. 1760. 1761. 1762. *Dr. Charles Moss,* Rector of St. George's, Hanover Square, Archdeacon of Colchester, and Canon of Salisbury, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells.

1763. *Dr. Ralph Heathcote.* Printed two Sermons only 8vo. 1763.

1764. 1765. Unknown.

1766. 1767. 1768. *Dr. William Worthington.* "The Evidence of "Christianity deduced from Facts and the Tes- "timony of Sense, throughout all Ages of the "Church to the present Time." 2 vols. 8vo. 1769.

1769. 1770. 1771. *Dr. Henry Owen.* "The Intent and Propriety of "the Scripture Miracles considered and ex- "plained." 2 vols. 8vo. 1773.

1772. 1773. 1774. *Dr. Glocester Ridley.* Not printed. He died before he finished the Course. The last Ser-

mon was read in Bow Church by Dr. Sclater. The Manuscripts are still in the possession of the Family.

1775.
1776. *Dr. Barford.* Not printed.
1777.

1778.
1779. *James Williamson, B.D.* "An Argument for the "Christian Religion, drawn from a Compa- "rison of Revelation with the Natural Opera- "tions of the Mind." The Substance of the Lectures was printed in 1 vol. 8vo. 1783.
1780.

1781.
1782.
1783. *Dr. East Apthorp*, then Rector of St. Mary le Bow. Not printed.
1784.
1785.

1786. *John Porter, M.A. Trin. Coll. Cambridge.* Not printed.

1787.
1788.
1789. *William Hodson, M.A. Trin. Coll. Cambridge.* Not printed.
1790.
1791.

1792. *Dr. Thomas Kipling, St. John's, Cambridge,* Dean of Peterborough. Not printed.

1793.
1794.
1795. *T. Cockshutt, B.D. St. John's, Cambridge.* Not printed.
1796.
1797.
1798.

1799.
1800. *Mr. Ward.* Not printed.
1801.

1802.
1803. *William Van Mildert, M.A. Queen's College, Oxford.* 2 vols. 8vo. 1806.
1804.

1805.
1806. *Thomas White, M. A. Queen's College, Oxford.*
1807.

1821.
1822. *William Harness, M. A. Christ's College, Cambridge.* "The connection of Christianity with
1823. "Human Happiness." 2 vols. 8vo. 1823.

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SERMON I.

GENESIS iii. 15.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

IN this sentence, passed by the Almighty upon the great adversary of mankind, a prophetic declaration is given of a contest to be perpetually maintained, between the Redeemer and the Destroyer of souls; between "the power of God unto salvation," and the power of Satan unto perdition.

Many topics of reflection present themselves to the mind, in contemplating this remarkable portion of Scripture:—some, relating to points far beyond the reach of human faculties, and therefore unfit for argumentative discussion: others, of general utility and importance, because intimately connected with our faith and practice.

To inquire wherefore the Supreme Being,

infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, hath permitted the continuance, or even the commencement of such a contest, is a fruitless, if not presumptuous speculation. The *origin of evil* is one of those subjects which have too often vainly exercised the greatest talents, and led men astray from more useful inquiries. Judging from the multifarious and endless disputes, which have divided the most subtle inquirers into this dark and mysterious subject, we may reasonably infer, that every disquisition relating to it will terminate either in impiety and atheism, or in that implicit reliance on God's good pleasure, which arises out of a firm belief of his moral perfections, and a just sense of our inability to fathom the depths of Omniscience.

But, however hopeless may be the attempt to assign, upon abstract principles, such reasons for the permission of evil, as will satisfy a sceptical inquirer; we may venture to affirm, that there is nothing in the phenomena of the moral world, which discredits what has been revealed concerning it in the holy Scriptures. The fact that evil does exist, is indisputable. All that we are able to discover, or rather to conjecture, on this point, without the light of Revelation, is, that the very existence of evil seems to indicate some per-

sonal agent of a malignant nature, by whom it is occasioned; while it appears no less certain, that a Being of infinite perfections would not suffer this to take place, but for the sake of producing such ultimate good as could not otherwise be so effectually obtained. To judge of the necessity or expediency of this dispensation, is not possible for man, without an intimate knowledge of the Divine counsels, or clearer information respecting the facts with which it is connected, than the light of nature can supply. Revelation, however, gives us such an insight into the subject, as may enable us to repel any surmises injurious to the Divine honour, though not to satisfy irreverent curiosity. The Sacred Writings declare, that there is a malevolent Spirit, who, being doomed, for his own offences, to the lowest depths of misery and despair, is become the instigator of sin and wickedness in others; that he was permitted, even in Paradise, for the trial of our first parents' integrity and obedience, to tempt them to rebel against their Maker; and that since the Fall, he is still suffered to put the faith and virtue of their descendants to continual proof, and to pursue, though not without restraint, his insidious machinations for their ruin:—but that all this is ordained by the Almighty,

for the purpose of displaying hereafter, in a more conspicuous and convincing manner, his wisdom, power, and goodness; since he will not fail so to overrule the malice and subtlety of the Evil One, as eventually to rescue the faithful from his tyranny, and to effect the final destruction of this their relentless enemy. Thus the Scriptures afford the solution of a difficulty not to be unravelled by human reason; teaching us to shut up all further inquiry into this mysterious subject, in a full persuasion that the time will come, when God shall "gather out "of his kingdom all things that offend, and "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in "the kingdom of their Father[a]."

The passage of Scripture under our consideration is, indeed, of especial importance in this latter point of view. The promise contained in it, respecting the final defeat of our great spiritual adversary, is that which can alone encourage us to "fight the good "fight of faith." To our first parents, overwhelmed with shame and terror, it afforded a certain, though far distant, prospect of victory over sin and death. To their posterity, who have lived to see it already made good in the *first* coming of the Messiah, (when He suffered

[a] Matt. xiii. 41, 43.

as a sacrifice for sin, "that, through death, He "might destroy him who had the power of "death[b]," the strongest ground of confidence is afforded, to rely on its still more glorious accomplishment in his *second* coming, when "all things shall be subdued unto Him," and He shall have "put all enemies under his "feet[c]." Thus considered, the very denunciation respecting the injury, which, in this conflict, the seed of the woman should sustain, serves to increase both our faith and hope. For, though the seed of the Serpent bruised the heel of the Messiah, and hath been, throughout all ages, the constant persecutor of those who trust in the promises of a Redeemer; yet, relying on Him who hath manifested his power to destroy this Enemy, we can now say, with confidence, "thanks be "to God, who giveth us the victory, through "our Lord Jesus Christ[d]."

Again, the prediction of the unremitting warfare here foretold, may be regarded as a gracious communication, intended to arm us against the dangers which we have to encounter. It prevents our being astonished at temptations, "as though some strange thing "had happened unto us:" it leads us to ex-

[b] Heb. ii. 14. [c] 1 Cor. xv. 25. 28. [d] Ibid. xv. 57.

pect those perils and difficulties, which otherwise might shake our resolution: and in the time of trial, it may serve to remove any apprehensions of our cause being disregarded by Him "whose promises are yea and amen," and "whose truth endureth throughout all "generations."

Moreover, the intimation here given of the trials and sufferings, which we are to undergo in the course of our spiritual warfare, directly overthrows the absurd theories, which vain sophists have endeavoured to establish, respecting the *perfectibility* of mankind in their present earthly state; since, it being thus declared, on Divine authority, that an enmity shall continually subsist between the Serpent and the Woman, and between his seed and her seed; and also that the seed of the Serpent shall bruise the heel of the Woman's seed, (that is, shall, to a certain extent, be permitted to inflict evil on the human race;) it necessarily follows, that, however certain may be the victory, which, through the power of his Redeemer, man shall *ultimately* gain over this implacable enemy, he can never hope to be, in this present life, entirely free from sin or danger.

Other instructions of a similar kind might be deduced from this portion of Scripture.

But my chief design in bringing it forward on the present occasion, is, to consider it merely in the light of a *prediction*, which hath been verified in a wonderful manner, from the earliest period of history to the present moment, and which (as we are hereby assured) shall still be accompanied with increasing evidence of its truth, until the entire completion of the Gospel system.

Such a prediction, directly appealing, for its confirmation, to the historical testimony of all succeeding ages, and hitherto amply confirmed by that testimony, appears to furnish us with one strong argument in proof of the Christian Revelation. For, whatever degree of incredibility Infidels may impute to the doctrines of that Revelation; or however they may ridicule the belief either of a Redeemer or a Tempter; it seems impossible for them to deny, that such a contest as that which is here foretold, has actually taken place: that there always has been an unabating and determined opposition carried on against the Christian scheme; and that there appears no probability of the cessation of this contest, without such an entire change in the views and dispositions of the contending parties, as observation and experience give us no reason to expect. Thus far at least, it must

be acknowledged, there has been a manifest coincidence between the prediction and the event.

Admitting, then, that a prediction of so peculiar a kind, when accompanied with sufficient evidence of its accomplishment, affords a convincing argument that more than human foresight was concerned in it; a developement of the rise and progress of the contest therein foretold, cannot but strengthen our confidence in the truth of the Christian Revelation, and may help to convince the Unbeliever in how hopeless a cause he is engaged. By unfolding the continued efforts of the powers of darkness to compass its destruction, and the continued interpositions of an overruling Providence to protect it against these reiterated assaults; we may collect a vast body of evidence in proof of its divine original, and make even the perverseness and folly of its opponents serve as attestations of its truth.

So intimately, indeed, is the history of Revealed Religion interwoven with that of its adversaries, and so striking is the testimony which is borne, by the several systems of error and impiety from time to time obtruded on the world, to the facts and doctrines contained in the Sacred Records; that whoever

would attain to a just conception of the wisdom of God in man's redemption, will be greatly assisted by viewing it in contrast with those false religions, which the great enemy of mankind hath endeavoured to substitute in its place. He will then perceive, that the incompatibility of the "wisdom "which is from above," with that wisdom which is "earthly, sensual, and devilish," or, in other words, the tendency of Divine Revelation to correct and restrain the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, has been the real cause of the opposition which it has experienced. And what stronger presumptive evidence can we desire of its being the work of God, than the unceasing hostility with which it has been assailed by wicked spirits and wicked men? That there can be no more concord between Christ and Belial than there is between light and darkness, is one striking proof of the heavenly origin of our Religion, and is the severest condemnation of those who have "neither part nor lot in this matter," because "their heart is not right in the sight of "God[e]."

From this view of the subject we may be convinced, that the prevalence of infidelity, far from affording any just ground for calling

[e] Acts viii. 21.

in question the truth of the Christian Revelation, ought rather to be considered as permitted, by the unsearchable wisdom of God, for the confirmation of our faith, "It must "needs be," said our Blessed Lord, "that of-"fences come[f];" and as St. Paul declared, that "there must be heresies" in the Christian Church, "that they which are approved might "be made manifest[g];" so we may infer, that there must be Infidelity, Apostasy, and Atheism, that they who "earnestly contend for "the faith," may obtain the greater recompense. The Gospel meanwhile stands firm and immovable: and every effort to destroy it ought to be regarded as a testimony reluctantly borne to its irreconcilableness with the views of that evil Spirit, who incessantly labours to involve mankind in the same misery to which he and his confederates are doomed. Hence it appears, that the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan cannot consist together; but that in proportion as the former gains ground, the latter is enfeebled, and hastens to destruction.

During the conflict, therefore, which the Church militant here on earth is destined to sustain with the powers of darkness, it is consolatory to reflect that its concerns are under

[f] Matt. xviii. 7. [g] 1 Cor. xi. 19.

the guidance of the same Almighty Power by whom it was first established, and who hath promised that "the gates of hell shall "not prevail against it[h]." It is this consideration which should lead us to "hold fast the "profession of our faith without wavering;" not to let our love of the Gospel "wax cold;" nor to be discouraged in our efforts to repel the attacks of infidelity, however bold and persevering: since it would betray a sinful mistrust of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, to doubt his continual care for the preservation of his Church, or the certainty of its final triumph, over every opponent, earthly and spiritual.

This, indeed, is a ground of confidence exclusively our own, and to which our adversaries can make no pretensions. They dare not affirm, that God hath vouchsafed to *them* any promises of help to maintain their cause. They will not pretend, that the Divine word is pledged for the support of *their* philosophy, or for the propagation of any doctrines repugnant to the Scriptures. On the contrary, they disclaim all reliance upon supernatural assistance. They trust to their own strength, to the superiority of their own reason, to the ability which they imagine themselves to

[h] Matt. xvi. 18.

possess of enlightening and convincing mankind. May we not, then, confidently adopt the language of Moses, when he spake of those who regarded not the God of Israel, but trusted to the gods of other nations, "*their* Rock is not as *our* Rock, our enemies "themselves being judges[i]?"

Nevertheless, as the increase of our Lord's kingdom is to be effected (under Providence) by the instrumentality of human means, we are not supinely to wait for the salvation of God, without exertions on our part to accelerate its progress. The Gospel is committed to us as a sacred deposit, for the preservation of which our constant vigilance and indefatigable attention are required. For, though the Divine promises, even in their most enlarged acceptation, will assuredly be made good, notwithstanding our indolence or neglect; yet *our* participation in the blessings resulting from them, will depend upon the earnest endeavours which we make to promote the success of the Gospel. Christ indeed still upholds the *Universal* Church, and every sound branch of it; but not in a miraculous manner. We see no extraordinary interpositions, now, in its defence. Its faithful members

[i] Deut. xxxii. 31.

are left to use such means as the ordinary dispensations of Divine Providence afford them, for repelling the attacks which are made upon it, and for promoting its increase. Much less, then, may any *particular* Church, however pure its faith, its worship, or its discipline, presume upon the Divine favour; unless it testify its zeal in defending the sacred trust committed to its care. To more than one of the Seven Churches of Asia it was threatened, that the light of the Gospel should be entirely withdrawn from them, in punishment of their indifference to its interests: and history records the execution of the threat. And although, in later ages, the hand of civil power has come in aid of Christianity, so as to afford it, according to human apprehension, a better prospect of continuance; yet we must remember that no earthly power can protect us against the Divine displeasure; and that even in those countries where Christianity flourishes under the auspices of the Civil Magistrate, it is left, and must be left, in a great measure, to the influence of argument and fair investigation, for its general acceptance.

For this reason, among many others, it becomes necessary that we should "be ready "always," according to St. Peter's injunction,

" to give a reason of the hope that is in us[k]:" —and our adversaries, it must be confessed, are not backward in calling upon us to do so. They give us ample scope for this exercise of our obedience: and unless we be ready to answer the demands which they so freely make upon us, we must not presumptuously rely upon the favour of Heaven.

The truth of the Christian Religion has, indeed, so often been demonstrated by the clearest proofs, that, to believers, it seems almost superfluous to repeat the arguments upon which our assurance of its truth depends. Yet when old objections are revived and circulated as new, it becomes necessary to new-model the answers likewise, and to adapt them to the exigencies of the case. Too true it is, that the greater part of mankind take their Religion entirely upon trust, without considering its importance, or inquiring into the proofs of its credibility. Of this circumstance Infidels avail themselves, to represent Christianity as an *irrational* system, which no man would adopt, if he took the pains to examine its pretensions. By such an insinuation, the pride of superficial believers is readily alarmed; and, rather than

[k] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

submit to the imputation of ignorance and weakness, they too often give the most certain proof of both, by rejecting what the ablest and strongest understandings have always been the most ready to receive.

To prevent such a miserable abuse of the gift of Reason, it is of great consequence that we should direct men to a right application of it, in estimating the evidences of Revealed Religion. Happily for us, Christianity may well boast of its entire conformity to sound and unprejudiced Reason: not, indeed, to that Reason, which arrogantly assumes a right of controverting even what is proved to be the Divine will; not to the Reason of the Atheist, who denies God; or of the vain Freethinker, who sets his own understanding in competition with Infinite Wisdom:—but to the Reason of the soberminded and sincere inquirer after Truth, who is willing to receive whatever has the stamp of Divine Authority impressed upon it, "with meekness and fear." Upon the ground of such reasoning, the intelligent and judicious advocates of Christianity have never feared to meet their assailants. Often have they been challenged to the conflict: as often have they entered the lists and come off victorious: and though the enemy may still renew his attacks, the

true Christian, knowing the strength and justice of his cause, will never be afraid to encounter him on fair and equal terms.

In reflecting upon the duty of Believers in this respect, it cannot but afford us great satisfaction to observe, that in every age of the Church there have been persons of preeminent talents, ready to step forward in vindication of our Holy Religion, and to combat the Infidel, with whatever weapons he may have undertaken the assault. Our own country, in particular, is distinguished by the number and ability of those who have "earn-" estly contended for the faith once delivered " to the saints." The noble and munificent Founder of this Lecture (himself a strenuous and successful advocate in the Christian cause) has, through the Divine blessing upon his pious institution, given occasion to the production of many valuable Treatises in its defence. Such, indeed, were the talents, learning, and diligence, displayed by many of those whose labours have been thus called forth, that he who now succeeds them in the same undertaking cannot but derive great encouragement, in the prosecution of his labours, from the consciousness of being strong in *their* strength, and rich in the supplies with which *they* have provided him.

With respect, however, to the *mode*, in which the defence of Christianity may be conducted, there is room for much diversity of proceeding. The object which the Founder of this Lecture had in view, may be attained, either by a general vindication of the Christian Religion against Infidels of every description: or by a defence of it against some particular class of unbelievers; or by a specific answer to such detached objections as, either from their weight or novelty, may appear to deserve consideration. Accordingly, among those who have hitherto laboured in this department, we find a great variety in the distribution of the subject: and in so many different points of view has it been considered, that probably no one argument tending, either directly or indirectly, to prove the truth of Christianity, has been left untouched.

But although, by the writers thus engaged in the cause of Revealed Religion, opportunities have continually been taken to expose the futility of the objections alleged against it, and to develope the insidious artifices of its opponents; yet it does not appear that Infidelity itself has ever been *systematically* treated, in order to exhibit it in its true and proper light, as the work of that Evil Spirit,

who, according to our Lord's declaration, was "a murderer from the beginning[1]," and who has never ceased to manifest the enmity predicted of him, in the text, against the sons of men, by leading them to forsake God, and to despise the means provided for their salvation.

The advantage of thus treating the subject, will readily be perceived by those who are accustomed to consider the scheme of man's Redemption as one grand design, whose operation commenced at the very instant of his Fall, and which is to be carried on, by the good providence of God, unto the very end of the world. For, as enlarged and comprehensive views of that wonderful design are necessary, in order to convey to us any adequate idea of its consistency, harmony, and perfection; so is it likewise necessary to survey the system of Infidelity on a large and extensive scale, if we would form a just conception of its character. Thus viewed, we can hardly fail to discern its invariable tendency to evil, and its repugnancy to the happiness of mankind.

It is proposed, therefore, in the ensuing Lectures, to give (in as succinct a manner as the subject will admit) a detail of the most

[1] John viii. 44.

remarkable instances, in which this hostility to the gracious design of man's Redemption has been manifested; and to expose the falsehood of the principles on which it has been conducted.

The materials to be collected for this purpose will be most conveniently arranged under two general heads, forming distinct topics of inquiry: the first, *historical*, the second, *argumentative*. Under the former head, facts are to be adduced, to prove that such a systematic opposition to Revealed Religion hath really taken place:—under the latter, arguments are to be brought, to shew its pernicious tendency, and that it is indefensible on any just and reasonable grounds.

In the first part of these Lectures, therefore, it is my design to take a summary view of the endeavours made to counteract the Revealed Will of God, in the times antecedent to the Christian dispensation;—then, to shew the perverseness of both Jews and Gentiles in their rejection of the Gospel, and their various efforts to overthrow it, from the time of our Lord's personal appearance on earth, to the downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire;—afterwards, to continue the inquiry through the Middle Ages, when almost the whole world was overspread by Ma-

hometan and Gothic barbarism: then, to contemplate the new aspect which Infidelity assumed, on the revival of letters and the introduction of the Protestant Reformation;—and, lastly, having brought down the history of its progressive labours to the present day, to consider what expectations we may justly entertain respecting the final issue of this tremendous contest.

This historical view of the subject being closed, it is intended, in the second part of these Lectures, to enter upon a general vindication of the grounds and principles of the Christian Faith, in answer to the arguments most commonly urged against its authority and credibility. These arguments (whether deduced from reasoning *à priori*, to shew the improbability, unfitness, and inutility of Revelation; or of reasoning *à posteriori*, to invalidate its evidences as a matter of fact;) will be distinctly considered, in order to expose their futility, and to shew the spirit of perverseness by which they are generally dictated.

The investigation here proposed will afford ample scope for a detection of the various fallacies, misrepresentations, and inconsistencies, with which the writings of Infidels abound. But the limits prescribed to the

present undertaking will require all the compression of which the subject is capable. Nevertheless, if from the historical part of our inquiry, however concise, we can deduce sufficient proofs of a wilful apostasy, on the part of unbelievers, from the known Will of God, and of a presumptuous opposition to his authority:—and if, from a fair discussion of the main points in dispute between them and Christians, we can make it appear that the arguments of the former rest on arbitrary assumptions, are contradictory to plain facts, and subversive of each other; whilst those of the latter have both Divine and human testimony to support them; are consistent, though various; and, however diversified in form, or in substance, mutually support and illustrate each other:—then will it be evident, that the contest between these opposite parties, is no other than the contest between the enemies and the servants of God; that the one have built their hope upon the rock of Truth, firm and immovable; the other upon the treacherous sands of Error, threatening them, every instant, with danger and destruction.

The execution of this design (however imperfectly performed) may, it is hoped, in some measure subserve the great and im-

portant end, of confirming our faith in the Gospel, and bringing to shame the cause of its opponents. Trusting, therefore, in the Divine blessing upon every honest endeavour to uphold the truth against falsehood and impiety, let us go forth to encounter the enemy, animated by the encouraging language of the Psalmist;—"The Lord is my light and "my salvation; whom then shall I fear? "The Lord is the strength of my life; of "whom then shall I be afraid? Though an "host of men were laid against me, yet shall "not my heart be afraid: and though there "rose up war against me, yet will I put my "trust in him[m]!"

[m] Ps. xxvii. 1—3.

SERMON II.

MATTHEW xiii. 37, 38, 39.

He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the Devil.

THE Parable of the Tares, to which these words relate, instructs us in the origin of that continued opposition to religious Truth, which has subsisted, from the first revelation of God's will to man, until the present moment. Our Lord represents this prodigious mass of evil as proceeding from the mischievous efforts of "the Devil," that enemy to God and man, who is the author and instigator of every evil work. They who labour to accomplish his purposes, are called his "children:" and they whom he seeks to corrupt, or to destroy, are "the children of the "kingdom," the faithful adherents to "the "Son of Man," whose kingdom they shall

finally inherit, notwithstanding the power and subtlety of this their malicious adversary.

The hatred which this evil spirit is represented in Scripture as entertaining towards mankind, must be supposed to have arisen from his previous hostility to man's Creator and Redeemer; an hostility, the ground of which is not discoverable by human reason, nor is it fully explained to us in the sacred Word. The sin of this chief of the fallen angels has indeed occasionally been made a subject of inquiry among pious and learned men; who have formed conjectures concerning the particular nature of the offence, not inconsistent with Holy Writ, though incapable, perhaps, of being proved from it, by any certainty of evidence. Into this point, however, it is not necessary for our present purpose to inquire. It is sufficient for us to know (what the Scriptures plainly declare) that the same spirit of pride, presumption, or envy, which prompted him to commit that offence (whatever it might be) whereby his own fall and condemnation were incurred, prompts him likewise to aim at the destruction of mankind, in order to frustrate God's gracious purpose in their Creation and Redemption.

We are now to enter upon the proposed inquiry into the labours of this our inveterate enemy; in the course of which it will not be difficult to shew, that as there has been no period of time in which God ever "left himself without witness[a]," or ever left mankind without some means of knowing his Divine will; so has there been none, in which the fatal influence of the tempter's endeavours to seduce men from that faith in the revealed will of God, which is the foundation of all true religion, was not manifestly evident.

That man was created good and perfect in his kind, and capable of continuing so, is not to be doubted by any who acknowledge the goodness and perfection of his Divine Creator. To enable him to continue in this state, we cannot but suppose that all necessary knowledge was imparted to him, together with all necessary help and encouragement to perseverance in his duty. From whatever quarter, therefore, temptations might assail him, it were impious to imagine that his transgression was the *inevitable* consequence, either of the weakness of his nature, or of the superiority of the tempter. "Resist the "Devil, and he will flee from you[b]," is an ad-

[a] Acts xiv. 17. [b] James iv. 7.

monition which must have been as applicable to man in his paradisiacal state, as under any subsequent dispensation. Hence it follows, that the first offence which man committed against the law of his Maker (whatever might be the subtlety employed to persuade him to the commission of it) was unquestionably a *wilful* and *presumptuous* offence, that is, a transgression of some known duty, a departure from the declared will of God, in compliance with his own will, and with the solicitations of an enemy both to God and himself.

Respecting the particular command, by the transgression of which our first parents fell from their native innocence and purity, it is simply recorded in the Sacred Word; without any additional information as to the inherent properties, or the mystical signification, of the Tree of Knowledge, or the Tree of Life. But we learn, that the Tempter succeeded in prevailing upon the victims of his subtlety to receive a very different notion of these properties from that which God had revealed; and that their believing in *him* rather than in GOD, was the cause of their sin and their condemnation. Thus it appears that the very first offence which man committed originated in *a disbelief of the Divine*

word, wrought in him by the suggestions of the Evil Spirit. Unbelief produced disobedience; disobedience, condemnation to misery and death: and the only hope held out to him of a recovery from that state of guilt and punishment, was to be obtained through his belief in a *new* revelation, thereupon vouchsafed to him, and proposed as a fresh trial of his *faith*.

As, therefore, man's continuance in his first state of innocency and happiness had depended upon faith in his Creator, through want of which he fell from that state; so under the Covenant of Grace now made with him, it was ordained that his title to pardon and acceptance should depend upon faith in his Redeemer, and that a want of that faith should no less certainly expose him to irrecoverable misery and destruction. Here a new scene was opened for the exercise of the Tempter's malice, whom henceforward we shall perceive, under every dispensation, endeavouring to strike at this fundamental ground of the hope of man.

In considering the condition of our first parents immediately after the Fall, we cannot but suppose them to have been fearfully conscious of their weakness and their danger. Hence they would be solicitous, not only to

understand the particular nature of the promise made to them, but also to receive some pledges of its fulfilment, and to be supplied with the means of performing the conditions of that new Covenant, into which, through the mercy of their heavenly Father, they were now admitted. In the provision made for these their immediate exigencies, and also for those of their posterity until the coming of Christ, we shall find abundant cause to adore the wisdom and goodness of God; and shall, at the same time, have occasion to observe the subtlety of the adversary, in endeavouring to frustrate whatever was intended for their instruction or consolation.

The very nature of man, compounded of soul and body, requires a mode of religion adapted to his twofold composition. Accordingly it appears, that in every Revelation of His Will to man, the Almighty hath enjoined religious services, *spiritual* in their signification and effect, but accompanied with *external* and visible tokens of obedience on the one hand, and of acceptance on the other. We have reason to believe, that even in Paradise there were ordinances of a *sacramental* nature prescribed for the observance of our first parents, and adapted to their condition and expectation in that state of innocence

and happiness. But whatever these might be, something of a different kind, and more suitable to the state of fallen and corrupt beings, would evidently become necessary, when they had forfeited their first hope of immortality, and were exposed to the just judgments of an offended God. Something might then be expected, which should bear reference to their peculiar circumstances, at once expressive of the guilt which they had incurred, and significant of the atonement which the mercy of God had provided for its expiation.

It can hardly be doubted, indeed, that the faith of Adam and of the Patriarchs, was, in substance, the same with that which is now more fully made known to us under the Christian dispensation; and that the system of Redemption was shadowed out to them, in the religious services which they were required to perform. This may be inferred both from what is recorded respecting the Ritual enjoined, and from the corrupt imitations of that Ritual prevalent among those who departed from the primitive faith.

Without attempting, however, to specify the several particulars of which the Patriarchal worship consisted, it may suffice to notice one most prominent and remarkable

feature, the institution of *animal sacrifices;* which appears to have taken place immediately after man's expulsion from Paradise, and to have been the principal outward service of religion, from Adam to Noah. That Adam was instructed to offer these, may reasonably be conjectured from its being mentioned that he was clothed, by Divine appointment, with the skins of animals, before it appears that he was permitted to kill them for food. That Cain and Abel offered sacrifices, one of the firstlings of his flock, and the other of the fruits of the earth, is expressly stated: and no reason so probable can be assigned for the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice and the rejection of Cain's, as that the former, being an *animal* sacrifice, was offered up agreeably to the Divine command, and was typical of the promised Redeemer, "by "faith" in whom "Abel" is said to have "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice "than Cain[c];" whilst the latter was no better than an act of *will-worship*, an offering contrary to the Divine command, inexpressive of humiliation, or of the necessity of an expiatory sacrifice, and proceeding from a presumptuous disregard of the doctrine of atonement by blood. The institution itself being

[c] Heb. xi. 4.

significant of that doctrine, and the performance of it enjoined as an evidence of man's reliance on the promised Redeemer, who was to be offered as a sacrifice for sin; a wilful departure from this ordinance indicated a disposition to contemn, as unnecessary, the thing signified as well as the sign itself, and to trust to other expedients for obtaining salvation, than those which God had ordained.

In Cain, therefore, we have the first instance after the Fall, of the Tempter's success in prevailing upon man, through the pride of human reason, to oppose God's merciful design, and, through want of faith, to reject the instituted means of pardon and acceptance. But no sooner had he thus perversely alienated himself from God, than he became a prey to the sinful passions of his corrupt nature, and exhibited a deplorable example of the wretched condition of man, when he forsakes God, and becomes a "child "of the Devil." Murder was the fruit of this apostasy; and his immediate punishment was that of being abandoned to his own devices, cast off from the service of God, and deprived of his covenanted title to the Divine favour.

From this period we begin to trace more distinctly the contest between "the seed of "the serpent," and "the seed of the woman;"

between "the children of the wicked one," and "the children of the kingdom." Cain and his posterity, having revolted from the service of the Most High, or, in the language of Scripture, "gone out from the presence of "the Lord[d]," enlisted themselves under the Prince of Darkness; whilst the posterity of Seth were distinguished by the title of "the "sons of God," to indicate their adherence to the true faith. There are not wanting good authorities for supposing that *idolatry* was introduced by the posterity of Cain, long before the death of Adam, and even (as some have conjectured) by Cain himself. The distinction between "the sons of God" and "the "daughters of men[e]," together with the mention of *giants* (which the learned in general interpret to denote rebels or apostates) warrants the opinion, that there was, in those days, a very general defection from the true religion. The reason likewise that is assigned in Scripture, for God's destroying the old world, that "the earth was corrupt before "God," and "that every imagination of the "thoughts of man's heart was only evil con-"tinually[f]," seems to imply, not only a prodigious excess of moral depravity, but an absolute apostasy from the worship of the true

[d] Gen. iv. 16. [e] Gen. vi. 2. 4. [f] Gen. vi. 5. 11.

God. In confirmation of which opinion, may be noticed a remarkable passage in the Book of Wisdom, which affirms, that "the devising "of Idols was the beginning of spiritual for- "nication, and the invention of them the "corruption of life[g];" and again, "that the "worshipping of Idols not to be named, is "the beginning, the cause, and the end of all "evil[h]."

But whether these proofs of the practice of Idolatry *before the Deluge*, be deemed satisfactory, or not, its prevalence in *after* times is beyond dispute. For, although it might have been expected, that so tremendous an event as the general Deluge would impress upon the minds of its survivors a strong sense of the danger of apostatizing from the true God, and would prevent a repetition of those offences, for which the old world was destroyed; yet scarcely had the earth recovered from the dreadful effects of this visitation, when the work of impiety was again carried on.

Ham, the youngest son of Noah, gave early indications of a disposition but too well suited to the designs of the Tempter. Ancient authors relate, that he and his posterity soon departed from the faith of the righteous Pa-

[g] Wisd. xiv. 12. [h] Ver. 27.

triarch, and in the true spirit of rebels, as well as apostates, sought to render themselves terrible to the worshippers of the true God, by associating together, and laying the foundation of a mighty empire, to be erected on the basis of Idolatry and Atheism. In process of time, the influence of this formidable tribe extended so far, as to threaten the inevitable execution of this gigantic project, and even the total overthrow of the true Religion, had not the signal interposition of the Almighty suddenly defeated their impious designs. The building of the Tower of Babel (intended, as some suppose, for a proud token of their departure from the worship of Jehovah, and of their determined adherence to Idolatry) was prevented by a miraculous confusion of their language; which produced, as its natural consequence, a disunion of their counsels, and, probably, a misunderstanding between each other, relative to the objects of their adoration. Thus their design of "making to themselves a name[i]," and adhering together, in defiance of the Almighty, was entirely frustrated; and they were compelled to abandon their undertaking, and to separate into various tribes and districts. By this timely dispersion, "the children of the king-

[i] Gen. xi. 4.

"dom," the faithful expectants of the promised Redeemer, were shewn to be under the especial protection of the Most High: and an awful lesson was afforded to mankind of the guilt and folly of opposing the Divine will.

Nevertheless, it appears, that, even after this display of Divine vengeance, Idolatry spread far and wide, wherever the posterity of Ham obtained a settlement; till it gradually corrupted all mankind (even the seed of the faithful) to so great a degree, that the Divine interposition was again manifested in the separation of Abraham and his seed, for the purpose of preserving a remnant who should call on the name of the Lord, and through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

From the calling of Abraham to the deliverance of the Israelites under Moses, we read of the most deplorable corruption and impiety throughout the Heathen world, especially among the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and the several tribes who inhabited the land of Canaan. This rapidly increasing evil was counteracted only by the unceasing superintendance of Almighty God, who in his protection and government of the small number that still adhered to the Faith, evinced both his power and goodness, and gave a continual

pledge of the fulfilment of his gracious promises to fallen man.

At length, when somewhat more than 850 years had elapsed from the time of the Flood, such was the increasing depravity of mankind, and such the state of tribulation and persecution to which the children of Israel, the only worshippers of the true God, were exposed, under the government of the tyrannous Egyptians, that it pleased God, still more signally than before, to display his power in their deliverance. The wonders performed in the land of Egypt on that memorable occasion were, indeed, peculiarly calculated to impress upon an idolatrous people, devoted to a blind adoration of the material world, a conviction of the vanity and folly of their senseless worship. Nevertheless, the impression made upon the sufferers, from these tremendous visitations, appears to have been but of very short duration.

The Israelites, thus delivered from a miserable thraldom, were taken under the immediate government of the Most High, and were guarded against the dangerous contagion of Idolatry, by a system of civil and religious polity, purely of Divine original, and admirably adapted to their peculiar circumstances. "The law," says the Apostle, (speaking as

himself of the seed of Israel,) "was our school-"master to bring us unto Christ[k]."—Its sacred ritual abounded with typical ordinances and with mystical representations of the spiritual truths of the Gospel, which it exhibited, as in a shadow, to the eye of the faithful worshipper. In the contemplation of this system, and in the performance of services which were calculated to wean them from an attachment to the licentious and abominable rites of Heathen worship, it was intended that the seed of Abraham should manifest to the world a pattern of faith and obedience, and should be instrumental in preparing both themselves and others for the appearance of the great Deliverer of mankind. Still further to aid this design, the Jewish Theocracy was accompanied (until the close of the prophetical period at least) with continued manifestations of God's immediate presence, such as could not fail to strike terror into their enemies, and to convince those who lived under this miraculous Dispensation, that they were indeed that chosen and peculiar race, to whom "pertained the promises" of Redemption, first revealed to the parent of mankind. Well, then, might God thus expostulate with them

[k] Gal. iii. 24.

by his Prophet, "What could have been done "more to my vineyard, that I have not done "in it? wherefore when I looked that it "should bring forth grapes, brought it forth "wild grapes[1]?"

Yet was this highly-favoured people oftentimes prevailed upon to alienate themselves from God, and continually did they provoke him to displeasure by their ingratitude and rebellion. Of this we have convincing proofs in their worship of the golden calf at Horeb; in their gross offence "in the matter of Peor;" in their fondness for "strange Gods," even for the Gods of those nations who had been extirpated for such idolatries, and over whom they had obtained the most miraculous successes; and also in the revolt of the ten tribes, when they forsook the law of Moses and the sacred temple of Jerusalem, to follow Jeroboam, who set up unhallowed altars at Dan and Bethel, where the service of Jehovah was polluted with idolatrous abominations. These and other facts recorded in the sacred history, together with the reiterated denunciations of the Prophets against both Israel and Judah, for their spiritual whoredoms and adulteries, abundantly prove that the

[1] Isa. v. 4.

great enemy of our salvation did not confine his labours to Heathen nations, but was active and successful in disseminating apostasy and unbelief even among God's chosen inheritance.

Let us now turn our attention from the Jewish to the Gentile world, availing ourselves of such light as either sacred or profane history may afford us, to shew the origin and progress of that prodigious mass of superstition which, through a series of ages, had been accumulated by Heathen nations.

From the scattered intimations to be found in Heathen historians of the greatest antiquity, as well as from the laborious researches of professed Mythologists, and the subsequent observations of modern writers on such remains of Heathenism as are still extant in various parts of the world, there is the strongest reason to conclude, that all these derived their false Deities, and their superstitious modes of worship, from the inventions of the posterity of Ham; who on their dispersion from Babel into far distant regions, laid the foundation of the various systems of Idolatry afterwards prevalent among mankind. Nations the most remote from each other, both as to time and place, bear astonishing testimony to the probability of this conjecture,

and concur in proving, (as far as such a matter is capable of proof,) that however diversified might be the features of their respective superstitions, they were still marked by so strong a resemblance to their original prototype, as well warrants the supposition that they owed their existence to that one fruitful source of error.

It has already been remarked, that the Patriarchal dispensation appears to have been accompanied with visible manifestations of the Divine presence, and with external ordinances significant of the great mystery of Man's Redemption. To these were added, under the Jewish Law, various symbols and services of a similar kind, more particularly adapted to typify the promised Messiah, and to preserve those for whose use they were ordained from relapsing into apostasy from the truth. The design of both dispensations was evidently the same, since both pointed to the promised Redeemer as their sole object, from whom all their efficacy was derived, and in whom they were to receive their full and entire completion.

Accustomed even from the beginning to this figurative mode of worship, by which the Almighty was graciously pleased to impart knowledge and consolation to mankind, it

appears that when the men of Babel, and their predecessors, departed from the faith first delivered to them, they prostituted its sacred rights and symbols to the purposes of superstition. In the perversion, therefore, of the instituted modes of Patriarchal worship, and afterwards of the Jewish Ritual, we shall find a key to many idolatrous practices among the Heathen of later times,—Mistaking, or (as their predecessors had done) perversely substituting signs for realities, and shadows for substance, succeeding ages departed yet more and more widely from the truth, till they lost all knowledge of God, and enlarged to an incalculable extent that system of Demon-worship, by which Satan himself, "the "prince of this world," became, in effect, the object of religious adoration.

But, to form a just notion of this subject, we must endeavour to ascertain on what *foundation* this monstrous system was erected, and how far the introduction of "strange Gods," as well as of superstitious modes of Worship, originated in wilful apostasy, or in mere ignorance of the truth.

The Polytheism of the ancient world is of so heterogeneous a description, as almost to preclude any attempt at a consistent explication of its principles. It appears, however,

to have chiefly consisted of three kinds; the worship of the elements and heavenly bodies, the worship of brute creatures, and the worship of deified men.

The first of these was undoubtedly the most ancient and the most extensive of any species of Idolatry. The heavenly bodies, as we learn from the books Moses and the Prophets, were adored among all the nations contiguous to Judæa, by a variety of appellations; and were, in other countries, and in later times, multiplied into a prodigious number of imaginary Deities. The *Air* was the grand agent represented by the most celebrated Divinities of Greece and Rome, and probably by those of nations of much higher antiquity. The element of *Fire* was another principal object of adoration, especially among the Persians and Chaldeans; and was symbolically represented under various forms and various denominations. The *Earth* was venerated as the parent of almost every thing requisite for food and sustenance: and the *Aqueous* element obtained an equal portion of superstitious honours; seas, rivers, springs, and fountains, being regarded as sacred in every country where Idolatry prevailed.

Now, to whichsoever of these objects the religious homage of mankind was directed,

whether to the heavenly bodies, to the supposed inherent powers of the elements, or to the visible effects produced by those powers; what was this but exalting the material world (incapable of thought, of consciousness, or of energy) to the rank of a spiritual, and intellectual, and self-existent Being? What was it but worshipping *Nature*, instead of the God of Nature, and transferring to the creature the honour due to the Creator? Whence, then, could such a strange perversion of the understanding, as well as such a departure from that knowledge of the Divine nature and attributes, which the Scriptures clearly prove to have been from the beginning revealed to mankind, have originated, but in the suggestions of that malignant Spirit, whose object it was, not only to withdraw men from the fear and worship of the true God, but, if possible, to involve them in total ignorance of his very existence?

The next prominent feature of Heathen Idolatry, the worship of the *brute* creation, appears to have been of later date than that of the elements and the heavenly bodies; and to have originated partly in the same source, partly in other corruptions of Revealed Religion. The fanciful assortment of the heavenly bodies into configurations of animals

might probably furnish several deities of this kind. The use of *Hieroglyphicks*, denoting by symbols the supposed qualities and powers of these and other objects, might also add considerably to their number: and it seems not improbable, that some figurative representations in the primitive Patriarchal worship (from which the Cherubim in the Mosaic Institute, and some of the visions described by the Prophets under the Jewish Dispensation, perhaps, derived their origin) were perverted to the introduction of this particular species of Idolatry. Whether any part of this worship might also arise from a reverence for certain animals, on account of their supposed utility to mankind, or the moral lessons which their habits and dispositions were thought to convey, it might be curious and instructive to examine. But such an inquiry would lead us into too wide a field of disquisition, and is not necessary for our present purpose.

The worship of Heroes, or deified men, though probably not so early a species of Idolatry as either of the other two, appears to have been somewhat connected with both. The personification of the Elements and of the Heavenly bodies might, in part, give rise to it: but a more probable cause may be as-

signed for its almost universal prevalence. The ancient Heathen, it is to be observed, (whatever pretensions they might make to antiquity higher than the earliest periods of the Mosaic chronology,) had no authentic documents of history prior to the Deluge: and concerning the *date* of that event, they differed greatly among themselves: making it to be more or less recent, according to the uncertain traditions which they had received respecting their own local transactions. It is, indeed, very remarkable, that almost every thing deserving of credit, which they have recorded as done by their Aboriginal forefathers, is found to synchronize, or nearly so, with this memorable event: the era of the *Flood* being, with respect to the writers of profane history, the same as the era of *Creation* to those who had the knowledge of Revelation, the *ne plus ultra* of their historical researches. In this event, therefore, we find (as might be expected) the most abundant materials of Gentile Idolatry. Many Deities representative of Noah and his sons, of the Ark, the Dove, the Olive-branch, and the Rainbow, were worshipped in every part of the world: the proofs of which have by learned writers been developed and detailed in the most satisfactory manner.

The traditions respecting Nimrod and his daring associates, afforded likewise to the inventive Heathen ample scope for the embellishment of their fables, and for the introduction of a new tribe of Deities; the number of which appears to have been prodigiously increased by the ignorance, or the vanity, of the Greeks; who, in adopting the mythology of Egypt, and other Oriental countries, oftentimes mistranslated the names of their Divinities, and misapplied them to persons and occurrences of their own countries; thus multiplying the objects of worship to an incalculable extent, so as to leave scarcely a vestige of truth or probability, on which the historian might rely. So complicated, indeed, and unintelligible was the whole system of Heathen Mythology at last rendered, by these means, that nothing remained for its ignorant votaries, but to permit an unrestrained intercommunity of Gods among their respective nations, adding to them, without reserve or distinction, and not attempting to prove their divinity, or even their existence.

It is not necessary to pursue this inquiry further. It ought not, however, to be omitted, that the Arch-Deceiver of mankind succeeded so far as to render *himself* also an object of worship, in various parts of the world,

under his proper emblem, the *Serpent*. How far this species of Idolatry might be connected, by hieroglyphical representation, with the planetary or elemental worship, is, perhaps, deserving of consideration. But whether the deification of the Tempter himself was hereby *intended*, or not, most certain it is, that he was worshipped under various other emblems, and, in some instances, even without disguise, as the acknowledged Author of Evil.

Whatever difficulty, then, there may be in arranging this perplexed mass of absurdity into any regular system, it is sufficiently evident that it must have *originated* (as has been already observed) in a *wilful* departure from the truth. For, when we consider, that man was not, from the beginning, left to himself, to discover the true Author of Nature, or the worship that was due to him, but was instructed, by immediate communication from his Creator, in every thing relative to his spiritual concerns, how can we regard the *introduction* of these false Divinities in any other light than that of wilful apostasy from the true God? *Ignorance* could not be the cause of Cain's departure from the faith, nor of the infidelity of his immediate descendants; neither could it be pleaded in excuse for "the

"children of Seth," emphatically called "the "Sons of God," when they forfeited their claim to that title, by entering into alliance with the wicked posterity of Cain. The same is to be observed respecting the immediate descendants of Noah; whom we can hardly suppose to have been ignorant of the true religion founded on the expectation of the promised Redeemer, notwithstanding their readiness, so soon after the Flood, to renounce that expectation, and to follow their own corrupt imaginations.

When we thus investigate the nature and origin of false religion, its heinousness, as involving the guilt of presumptuous opposition to the Divine will, is hardly to be disputed. It is, therefore, but a vain apology for Heathenism (when we speak of its first origin and introduction) to treat it as the harmless invention of poor unenlightened mortals, labouring, with good intentions, but under invincible ignorance, to discover the true God, and to perform to him an acceptable service. Neither will it avail (for the vindication of the earliest apostates, at least, from the true Faith) to have recourse to those refined and specious theories, by which ingenious men have endeavoured to conceal the deformities of the Gentile superstitions,

under the semblance of profound mystical instruction; representing them as useful political institutions; nay, even dignifying the objects of Pagan worship with the appellation of "elegant Divinities;" and extolling them as the invention of wise and discerning minds. Whereas the fact appears to be clearly this; that mankind had been from the beginning in possession of the one true Religion; but that the founders of Heathen Idolatry "forsook the Lord," that they might "serve "strange Gods." This is uniformly the language of Scripture; and every thing that we can collect from history confirms the truth of this representation.

It now only remains to offer some few observations on the *rites* and *ceremonies* of the Heathens, illustrative of the position already laid down, that the whole of their *worship* was nothing else than a perversion of the ordinances of Revealed Religion.

And here we must again advert to the institution of *Animal Sacrifices*, so prevalent in the Gentile world. Nothing is more unaccountable, on any principle of Natural Religion, than this institution; nor can any other probable reason be assigned for supposing it to be acceptable in the sight of God, than that it was believed to be of Divine

appointment. Whence, indeed, could the Heathen derive their notion of its efficacy, but from Revelation? or how could they entertain any expectation of atoning for their offences, and appeasing the Divine wrath, by such means, had they not received, through the channel of tradition, intimations of its being primarily ordained by Divine command? However perverted, therefore, this institution might be, and however prostituted to the vilest and most shocking purposes, it still bears testimony to the truth of Revelation, and affords a striking instance of the insidious endeavours of the Adversary to give to false Religion the semblance of the true, and to convert the means of salvation into instruments of destruction.

The *Oracles* of the Heathen are stamped with a similar character of falsehood imitative of truth. The whole system of Heathen divination has the appearance of a delusive attempt to emulate those solemn and well-authenticated communications, which God, from time to time, vouchsafed to his chosen people. It is not, indeed, easy to conceive that such deceptions could ever have been practised on mankind, had there not been clear and indisputable proof, already given, of the reality of *some* Divine communications.

In the imitation or perversion of these, therefore, we discern the true origin of the earliest impostures of this kind. Under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, men had been accustomed to receive declarations of the Divine will through the medium of *inspired* messengers. It was, therefore, natural to expect that every system of falsehood or imposture would make pretensions, at least, to the same authority, since none could hope to find acceptance among mankind which did not seem to be sanctioned by such support.

Indeed, in the whole ritual of Heathen Worship, in its Temples, Altars, Priesthood, Vestments, Oblations, Purifications, and the like, there appears such a studied resemblance to the sacred ordinances of Revealed religion, as can only be accounted for by a reference to that, as its model and prototype. That one must have been borrowed from the other is, almost, a necessary inference. And since no doubt can reasonably be entertained of the superior antiquity of the Jewish Ritual, much less of the Patriarchal, to those of the Greeks and Romans, and even of the earliest Heathen nations;—since also there is nothing, generally speaking, in any of these Institutions, which, *antecedently to Divine Revelation*, could lead men to suppose that they would

be acceptable in the sight of God;—we seem to be under a necessity of regarding the whole system of Gentile superstition as merely a depraved copy of a Divine original; by which all worship, both external and internal, was transferred from the true God to false Deities, and mankind were gradually alienated from the only just object of their love and veneration.

In pursuing the history of this wonderful infatuation of the Heathen world, we may also observe, that the nearer we approach to that "fulness of time" when the Messiah was to appear, the more inveterate and incurable does it appear. The widely-extended dominion of Idolatry and Superstition in every part of the known world, the gross darkness which overspread all mankind (the Jews alone excepted) respecting God and a future state; the excesses of lust and cruelty practised even in the most solemn rites of Religion; the consequent depravation of morals among all ranks and degrees of men; and the prodigious increase of demoniacal possessions, affecting the bodies as well as the souls of men:—these, and other well-authenticated facts, prove the malice of the Evil Spirit, raging more and more fiercely, as the time drew near when the promised Deliverer of

mankind was to rescue them from this their relentless Enemy.

Thus has an attempt been made to trace, from the Fall of Adam to the coming of Christ, the efforts of our great spiritual Adversary, to counteract God's gracious purposes towards fallen man. Nothing more, however, has been intended, than to give such a succinct view of the subject, as might serve by way of introduction to the subsequent inquiry. To have detailed the several particulars necessary to establish or illustrate what has been advanced, so as to satisfy an inquisitive mind, would have led to a discussion of great length, and would have precluded the requisite attention to other parts of our subject. Yet even in this compendious view, a striking illustration seems to be afforded of our Lord's significant parable in the text, "he that soweth "the good seed is the Son of Man: the field "is the world: the good seed are the children "of the kingdom: but the tares are the "children of the wicked one: the enemy "that sowed them is the Devil." Nothing, indeed, is more evident, than that, in the times preceding our Lord's Incarnation, the seed of the Serpent was unceasingly at enmity with the seed of the Woman; endeavouring to seduce mankind from their duty, to subvert

their hopes, and to lead them to perdition. During the course of 4000 years, frequent manifestations were given of a Divine power, labouring to reclaim men from their idolatrous corruptions, working wonders of such a kind as had especial reference to the objects of their senseless adoration; evincing an absolute command of those very elements which they deified; and exercising an uncontrollable dominion over all created nature. Yet in vain were these appeals made to the common understandings of all men: in vain did the Almighty lay bare his arm to vindicate his insulted majesty: perverse man listened to the suggestions of the Deceiving Spirit; "loved darkness rather than light;" hated the truth, and cherished a lie.

In the mind of every one, who is not totally insensible to the spiritual miseries of mankind and regardless of their eternal welfare, such a scene as this cannot but excite the most painful emotions. Nevertheless, it may teach us an instructive lesson, by convincing us of the utter incapacity of man to know or to practise what is good, without light from above; and of his folly, his baseness, his stupidity, when he "forsakes the fountain of "living water, and heweth out to himself "cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no

" water[m]."—Here, then, let us close our inquiries for the present, till we can proceed to view him under new circumstances, and in a more improved condition; happy if from any view of him we learn this salutary and important truth, that " the fear of the Lord " is the beginning of wisdom;" and that " there is neither knowledge, nor counsel, " nor understanding, against the Most High."

[m] Jer. ii. 13.

SERMON III.

LUKE ii. 34, 35.

Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

IT is remarkable, that in the beginning of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, we are taught to expect a vehement opposition to the work of man's Salvation. In the promise of a Redeemer, vouchsafed to our first parents, this opposition was clearly foretold.—At the birth of that Redeemer, the devout Simeon, whilst expressing his joy and gratitude on the entrance of the Saviour into the world, declares, that this very Saviour was destined to sorrow and suffering, and prepares us to look for that "contradiction "of sinners[a]," which our Lord personally experienced throughout his ministry. He

[a] Heb. xii. 3.

represents him as "a sign which should be "spoken against;" prophesies to his Mother, that she should experience the acutest anguish on his account; and intimates that the rejection or acceptance of the gracious system which he was about to promulge, would be the test of men's disposition to serve and obey God; would "reveal the thoughts of "their hearts," so as to make it manifest, whether they "loved darkness rather than "light," or were "meet to be partakers" of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

The unceasing efforts of the adversaries of Revealed Religion, under the several dispensations of the Old Testament, have been already noticed: and from what was advanced on that subject it appears, that not only the whole Gentile world were corrupted by apostasy from the Faith, so as scarcely to have preserved a remnant of pure Religion; but that even the Jews, the chosen people of God, continually manifested a disposition to oppose the Divine will, to shake off their allegiance to the Most High, and to join in Heathenish abominations.

It had pleased God, however, so frequently and so severely to chastise this perverse and stubborn people for their folly and rebellion, that they still retained a strong sense of their

subjection to Him, and were distinguished from all the nations of the earth by their adherence to the Lord Jehovah. They were also favoured with evident tokens of their being under *His* immediate direction, before whom all the Gods of the Heathen were vain and impotent. So decisive, indeed, were the proofs of the Jewish Theocracy, and so conspicuous its effects, in the *temporal* rewards and punishments with which it was accompanied, that it might almost be deemed an object of sight, rather than of faith, to those who lived under its rule and guidance. Moreover, the galling captivities and cruel persecutions which the Jews from time to time endured, appear to have gradually weaned them from their proneness to Idolatry, and at length to have brought them to an unfeigned acknowledgment of the true God, and an *exclusive* adherence to his worship. Hence we find them, at the time of our Lord's Advent, a people, who (notwithstanding their state of servitude to the Roman power) were zealously attached to the Mosaic Ritual, scrupulously observant of its ordinances, and holding in the utmost abhorrence all those who refused to admit its authority.

Under such circumstances, we might reasonably expect that they should discover

a great readiness to receive the promised Messiah, and an ardent desire to behold the accomplishment of the ancient prophecies in the Gospel Dispensation. And this, in fact, appears to have been the case. For, the Jews well knew, from the received interpretation of their own Scriptures, that "the fulness "of time was come," when the Messiah, the promised seed of Abraham, should appear, to effect that great deliverance foretold from the very period of the Fall of man. And so generally did this expectation prevail, that even the Heathen nations, who were indebted to the Jewish Scriptures, or to earlier Patriarchal Traditions, for their information on this subject, were impressed with a similar persuasion, that the time was at hand for the birth of some extraordinary person in the land of Judæa, in the benefits of whose coming they were, in some way or other, to participate. The journey of the Magi from the East to worship the new-born prince, and the anxiety of Herod to destroy him, are striking proofs of the prevalence of this expectation among both Jews and Gentiles.

But, notwithstanding this circumstance, (so favourable, as we might suppose, to the reception of one, in whom was fully accomplished the predicted character of the

Messiah,) we have still fresh proofs to produce of the success of the Deceiver, in prevailing upon the Jews to "make the things "that should have been for their wealth, an "occasion of falling[b]." It seems, indeed, as if the Tempter, baffled in his efforts entirely to seduce the people of God from an attachment to the Truth, and openly to enlist them in his own service, had now changed his plan of delusion, and determined to work upon them in a different way: since we find, henceforward, a propensity on the part of the Jews to oppose the gracious designs of the Almighty, in a manner totally unlike to their former conduct. Instead of that laxity of principle and disregard of their own peculiar advantages, which formerly induced them to forsake the God of their fathers and follow after strange Gods, we now see them take an opposite course, and become the most bigoted of all people.

The mercies and the judgments which they had experienced under the immediate government of Almighty God, had convinced them that it was in vain to contend against the Most High; that "the counsel of the "Lord, that shall stand[c];" and that all their

[b] Ps. lxix. 23. [c] Prov. xix. 21.

success, even in this world, depended upon their obedience to His Will. Accustomed to these sensible manifestations of the Divine superintendance, they yielded, however reluctantly, to the forcible impression which they made upon them; but at the same time fixed their attention, so exclusively, upon the *temporal* advantages or sufferings attendant upon the Mosaic Dispensation, as to overlook its principal design, that of bringing them to a right understanding of the *spirit* of its Institutions, and preparing them for "a better "covenant, established upon better pro-"mises[d]." They did not consider, that "the "letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life[e];" that the whole of the Mosaic institute was designed to convey to them intimations of a far more excellent dispensation; that it shadowed out to them benefits of an infinitely more important kind than those which the mere outward performance of its Ritual could be supposed to convey; that, in short, "the end of the Law for righteous-"ness to every one that believed[f]," was "Christ," in whom every part of it was to be accomplished, and without whose prevailing merits the most scrupulous observance of

[d] Heb. viii. 6. [e] 2 Cor. iii. 6. [f] Rom. x. 4.

it could have no title to the Divine acceptance.

Thus cherishing the strongest prejudices against every thing which seemed to endanger their civil and ecclesiastical polity, or to derogate from the intrinsic value of the Levitical Law;—and entertaining towards the Gentiles (whom heretofore they had been but too prone to imitate) such contempt as to deem them utterly unworthy of being joint partakers with them in the promised Covenant;—the Jews (however ardently they might wish for the coming of the Messiah, and however conversant they might be with the Sacred Writings, in which his personal character and office were clearly set forth) had laid such stumblingblocks in their own way, as rendered them almost incapable of receiving him in his *proper* character, and prepared them to become his most implacable opponents.

Accordingly, when our Lord opened his commission to the Jews, it is said, by the Evangelist, that "he came to his own, and "his own received him not[g]." Their eyes were shut against the wonderful works which he performed, and their ears stopped against

[g] John i. 11.

the heavenly doctrine which he delivered; so that seeing they would not see, and hearing they would not understand. Unable either to refute his arguments, or to disprove the evidences of his mission, their whole demeanour towards him betrayed a spirit the most contradictory and perverse.

In conformity with their ill-founded expectations of a temporal Prince, they continually sought to entangle our Blessed Lord in *political* discussions; hoping (as it should seem) to discover in him intentions of leading them on to earthly conquests and temporal dominion. — When he disappointed them in these expectations, they became sullen and enraged. At one time, they sought to force upon him the regal dignity[h]. At another, they would fain accuse him of seditious and treasonable designs[i]. At another, they despised his lowly birth and parentage, tauntingly deriding him as "the "carpenter's son[k]." Even the Twelve were not free from these prejudices. They were inquisitive to know, who should be "the "greatest in his kingdom[l];" they solicited the highest honours which he might have to bestow[m]; and inquired of him, with evident

[h] John vi. 15. [i] John xix. 12. [k] Mark vi. 3.
[l] Matt. xviii. 1. [m] Matt xx. 21.

anxiety as to the accomplishment of their ambitious views, when he would "restore "again the kingdom to Israel[n]?"

In like manner, a bigoted attachment to their own civil and religious system, and a contempt for those of other nations, led them to be highly indignant at every word or deed, on the part of our Blessed Lord, which appeared to indicate an intention to abrogate the Law of Moses. On this point, no proof of his authority, however indisputable, was sufficient to convince them: but they reviled him as a schismatic, and a contemner of their divinely-inspired Legislator. "Say "we not well," they exclaimed, "that thou "art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil[o]?" insinuating that he was desirous of introducing new opinions, contrary to the Jewish Law, the sacred word of God.

In their mode of urging these objections, we perceive a fixed determination to resist any evidences whatsoever of his being empowered to "speak as one having authority, "and not as the Scribes[p]." In vain was it, that he "spake as never *man* spake[q]," and that he "went about doing good[r]." Nothing would satisfy these unreasonable and evil-

[n] Acts i. 6. [o] John viii. 48. [p] Matt. vii. 29.
[q] John vii. 46. [r] Acts x. 38.

minded disputants. Sometimes they accused him of being "the friend of publicans and "sinners[s]," and a Sabbath-breaker[t]:—at other times they insinuated that he was an enemy to the Roman power[u], that very power which they themselves detested, and from which they were most anxious to be delivered. His miracles, full of mercy and goodness, were attributed to the agency of evil spirits; or were contemned as inferior to those of Moses, and not sufficiently demonstrative of a Divine mission. At one time, they exclaim, "he casts out devils, through Beelzebub, the "prince of the devils[x];" at another, "shew us "a sign from heaven[y]." His doctrine, persuasive and authoritative, beyond the power of human eloquence and wisdom, was scoffed at, on account of his lowly birth: "whence," say they, "hath this man this wisdom, and "these mighty works?" a question easy to be resolved, had they considered that the very meanness of his birth, and his want of the advantages of education, proved that his extraordinary wisdom and his mighty works could only proceed from the power of the Most High, and were unquestionable evi-

[s] Matt. xi. 19. [t] John v. 18. [u] Luke xxiii. 2.
[x] Matt. xii. 24. [y] Matt. xvi. 1.

dences of his being "that Prophet which "should come into the world[z]."

At length, his enemies, baffled in every attempt to impeach his conduct, or to disprove his Divine mission, were driven to seek, by turbulence and clamour, the accomplishment of that, which malicious ingenuity had been unable to effect. The rage of his persecutors attained their accursed object, in the death of "that Just One," on whom sentence of condemnation was passed, by the very Judge who had solemnly declared him innocent[a]; and throughout the last scene of his bitter sufferings, were displayed barbarity and malice, the most ferocious and diabolical that ever disgraced the human character.

But what was the effect of all this outrage?—Multitudes had seen, heard, and believed. Many of the people venerated their heavenly Instructor. The irresistible evidence of his miracles had forced conviction even upon some of his enemies. His word had been with such power, that all were astonished at his doctrines, and "wondered "at the gracious words that proceeded out "of his mouth[b]." The Pharisees had acknowledged that "the world was gone after him[c]."

[z] John vi. 14. [a] xviii. 4. 6. [b] Luke iv. 22. [c] John xii. 19.

and expressed their fears that "all men would "believe on him[d]." His disciples, who had known him most intimately, were firmly persuaded of his Divine character, and sincerely resolved to adhere to him; although their constancy was shaken, for a time, by his cruel sufferings. Even during our Lord's Ministry, the progress of the Gospel throughout Judæa, Galilee, Samaria, and the regions round about, had been sufficient to prove, that neither the subtlety nor the violence of its enemies could possibly withstand its force.

When the Apostles succeeded to the arduous work of the Ministry, and were endued with power from on high, they "went forth, "and preached every where, the Lord working "with them, and confirming the word with "signs following[e]." It is hardly possible to read St. Luke's narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, (attested as it is, in several most important particulars, by contemporary writers of profane history,) and doubt of their being favoured with especial assistance from above, for the propagation of the Gospel. Nevertheless, from that period to the destruction of Jerusalem, we discover in the conduct of the Jews, continued proofs of the same spirit of impiety and delusion, by which

[d] John xi. 48. [e] Mark xvi. 20.

they were actuated in their treatment of our Lord himself. The doctrine of "Christ cru- "cified" was rejected with scorn; and their evil hearts became more and more hardened through unbelief. Instead of repenting of their crime; instead of suffering themselves to be convinced even by the astonishing miracle of our Lord's Resurrection, or by the wonders which the Apostles and Evangelists performed in his name; they persecuted the believers, wherever they could lay hands upon them. The first Martyr in the cause of the Gospel fell a victim to their malice[f], and Herod Agrippa, being just raised to the regal government of Judæa, sought to gain popularity among the Jews, by "stretching forth "his hands to vex certain of the Church," by imprisoning Peter, and "killing James the "brother of John with the sword[g]." Even the Conversion of St. Paul, who had been distinguished among the Jews by his zeal for the Mosaic law, and by his vehemence against the disciples of Christ, failed of producing its proper effect upon the Jewish rulers; who not only shut their eyes against conviction, but assailed him with the utmost violence, conspiring against his life[h], beating,

[f] Acts vi. 9, &c. [g] xii. 1, 2, 3. [h] xxiii. 12.

imprisoning, scourging, and stoning him[i], regardless, in some instances, even of the forms of law[k], and intent upon his destruction by any means whatsoever.

By these and similar outrages, did this infatuated people, vainly "fighting against "God[l]," bring upon themselves the swift and terrible destruction affectingly foretold by Christ himself. Disappointed and enraged at not finding in the Messiah a temporal prince and deliverer, (such as they had perversely framed in their own imagination,) they became clamorous and disobedient to the Roman power: and their seditions were, in many instances, marked by extreme barbarity. Hence the Roman Emperors were provoked to such measures of coercion and retaliation, as terminated in the utter subversion of their temple, their city, and their whole system of civil and ecclesiastical polity. Their offences were, indeed, so flagrant, that even their own countryman, Josephus, declares, that he "never "heard of so wicked a nation." The nearer the time approached for the accomplishment of their predicted overthow, the more ungovernable, cruel, and licentious, did they

[i] Acts xvi. 22, 23. xxii. 24. xiv. 19.
[k] Acts xxii. 25. xxiii. 3. [l] Acts v. 39. xxiii. 9.

become. Their covetousness and rapacity were insatiable, their rebellions unceasing, their hatred implacable: and even their habitual reverence for their Temple was not sufficient to restrain them from the commission of sacrilegious enormities, such as they would have shuddered at in former times.

Every thing now indicated that they were a people marked out for signal vengeance. Within, all was discord, turbulence, and corruption: without, dangers of every description menaced them with instant ruin. Such was the bitter hatred subsisting between the numerous Sects into which they were divided, that instead of uniting, as in one common cause, for mutual protection, they seemed to lose sight of the general interest, in their zeal to vex and persecute each other. All parties, however, continued to incense the Roman Government more and more by their turbulent behaviour, and also to inflame, as well as delude, the minds of their fellow-countrymen, by vain hopes of a Messiah, who should suddenly appear to save them from the impending destruction. Hence the eagerness of the multitude in listening to every Impostor who set up pretensions to that character; proving that they were no less credulous in following after "false Christs"

than they had formerly been obstinately incredulous in rejecting the true one.

The desolation which speedily followed these portentous appearances, is too well known to require a particular detail. Whether we consider the fearful presages which immediately preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, or the tremendous circumstances with which it was accompanied, it may justly be regarded as an event unparalleled in the annals of mankind; whilst the astonishing and minute coincidence of its several particulars with the prophecies of the Old and New Testament, proves that the hand of God was manifest throughout that signal display of dreadful retribution.

Thus did the Jews, in their whole conduct towards our Blessed Saviour and the Gospel which he revealed unto them, discover such impiety and infatuation, as proved them to be under the influence of that Apostate Spirit to whose suggestions they had ever been prone to yield, and who, for the punishment of their atrocious offence in despising the offer of Salvation and crucifying its Divine Author, was at length suffered to hurry them on to misery and ruin.

But we shall form a still more adequate conception of the heinousness of this offence,

if we consider how greatly it was aggravated by the peculiar advantages which the Jews enjoyed, and by the futility and perverseness of those objections which they alleged in excuse for their infidelity.

Our Lord repeatedly accused the Jews of wilful unbelief, in their rejection of his claims. "Ye will not come to me," said he, "that "ye might have life[m]."—"Ye both know me, "and ye know whence I am[n]."—"If ye were "blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye "say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth[o]." The Jews could not be considered as an ignorant and barbarous people; since, as to religious knowledge, they were enlightened far beyond other nations. Their duty was taught them from above. They boasted, and justly, that their Laws were framed by a Divine Legislator. They alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, enjoyed the light of pure Revelation. They were not only generally instructed in the knowledge of the Divine will; but were selected by the Almighty as the depositaries of that Faith, through which all mankind were to be saved; and they were familiarized to Divine communications by the inspiration of a long succession of Prophets,

[m] John v. 40. [n] vii. 28. [o] ix. 41.

declaring "things to come," and revealing truths of the utmost importance to the whole human race.

In the writings of these inspired teachers, the characteristic tokens of the Messiah were so clearly delineated, as to leave the Jews without excuse, in not making a right application of them. Our Lord came precisely at the time when they expected that he was to come, conformably with these ancient Prophecies. So general was this expectation of him, that when John the Baptist appeared, it is said, that "all men mused in their hearts "of John, whether he were the Christ, or "not[p]:" nor was this a sudden or vague conjecture, hazarded by fanatical pretenders to Prophecy, or grounded on ill-digested interpretations of the Sacred Writings; but the result of a deliberate investigation of those writings, deeply studied by men thoroughly qualified to elicit their true signification. Even in the minutest particulars revealed of the Messiah, relative to his birth and lineage, the place of his nativity, the time of his coming, and other important circumstances by which he was to be distinguished from the rest of mankind, it is manifest that the several occurrences of our Lord's life and

[p] Luke iii. 15.

ministry did most wonderfully correspond with what had been foretold of him. Hence he directly charged the Jews with hypocrisy, in affecting to disbelieve him: "Ye hypocrites, " ye can discern the face of the sky; but can " ye not discern the signs of the times[q]?"

Again; our Lord's personal character, his disinterested goodness, his purity, his benevolence, together with the astonishing miracles which he wrought, abundantly testified his Divine mission. To these he continually appealed in his own vindication. " Which of " you," saith he, "convinceth me of sin[r]?"— " Many good works have I shewed you from " my Father; for which of those works do " ye stone me[s]?"—" If I had not done among " them the works which none other man did, " they had not had sin: but now they have " both seen and hated both me and my Fa- " ther. But this cometh to pass, that the " word might be fulfilled that is written in " their law, They hated me without a cause[t]."

The Jews could not possibly be unacquainted with any of the circumstances on which the proofs of his being the Messiah were founded; for, as St. Paul argued, " this " thing was not done in a corner[u]." They

[q] Matth. xvi. 3. [r] John viii. 46. [s] John x. 32.
[t] John xv. 24, 25. [u] Acts xxvi. 26.

saw his miracles; and they attributed them to the power of Satan, finding it impossible to deny their reality. They were as certain, therefore, of His Divine mission, as their forefathers were of that of Moses. Nay, Moses himself had expressly foretold the coming of such a person, to whom he commanded them to "hearken[x]." Hence our Lord said to them, "Search the Scriptures:" —"Do not think that I will accuse you to "the Father; there is one that accuseth you, "even Moses, in whom ye trust[y]."

What, then, had the Jews to urge against a body of evidence so forcible and convincing?

They were chiefly disappointed that our Lord did not come as a temporal prince, to deliver them from the Roman yoke.

Yet the absurdity of expecting him to assume such a character may be easily proved from the Jewish Scriptures. The prophecies of the Old Testament do, indeed, describe in very magnificent terms, the greatness, the extent, and the duration of the Messiah's kingdom; and expatiate on his personal dignity, as a Priest, a Prophet, and a King. But they also speak of him as one who should

[x] Deut. xviii. 15. [y] John v. 39. 45.

be "despised and rejected of men;" who should be esteemed "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted[z];" and, as Daniel foretold, "cut "off, but not for himself[a]," that is, unjustly put to death. These are circumstances which appear wholly inconsistent with his being distinguished by worldly honours, and possessed of temporal dominion; although they are strictly compatible with the most exalted titles that could belong to him in a *spiritual* sense.

Again; one of the most remarkable predictions in the Old Testament declares, "the "Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, until "Shiloh (that is, the Messiah) come[b]:" intimating, that, whenever he came, the Sceptre *would* depart, and consequently that he could not be a temporal Prince. There is also a manifest impropriety in supposing, that a temporal Deliverer could be intended, when it is considered that the faithful who lived under the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations are represented as having a personal interest in his coming. For, what possible interest could *they* have in the promise of an earthly monarch, to appear so many ages after their decease, for the purpose of subduing

[z] Isa. liii. 3, 4. [a] Dan. ix. 26. [b] Gen. xlix. 10.

the kingdoms of the world?—Moreover, the Jewish Scriptures continually set forth the pomps and vanities of this world as unworthy the regard of the faithful. How then could the Jews imagine that the design of the Gospel Dispensation was to terminate in worldly prosperity? Nay, since it could not but be acknowledged by the Jews themselves, that this world must come to an end, and, consequently, that Messiah himself and his generations should ultimately fail; how would they find, in any extent of temporal grandeur or dominion, a fulfilment of those splendid promises which their Prophets had given, respecting the *perpetuity* of the Messiah's kingdom?

These considerations may suffice to shew that all the Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Kingdom of Christ were, of necessity, to be understood, not in a *literal* but in a *spiritual* sense. There is also evidence to prove, that they were explained according to this latter sense, by the most ancient and approved Interpreters in the Jewish Church.

Many remarkable passages to this effect have been collected, by learned and diligent inquirers, from the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, from the two most ancient

Chaldee Paraphrases of the Holy Scriptures, (the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,) and also from the writings of the learned Jew, Philo: all of which having been written (as there is good reason to believe) either before or about the time of our Lord's appearance, afford satisfactory evidence as to the opinions and expectations of the Jews at that particular juncture.

From these it appears, that the Jewish teachers understood the first promise, made to Adam, of a Redeemer, to denote a spiritual deliverance from sin and death; and that they clearly perceived, from an attentive consideration of the Sacred Writings, that the purpose of the Messiah's coming was, to heal the wounds which the Serpent had made, and to remove the curse entailed upon man for his transgression. It also appears, that the celebrated fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and many other passages of Scripture descriptive of the Messiah's humiliation and sufferings, were interpreted by these writers in a sense similar to that in which they have always been understood by Christians. Here, then, is a strong argument against the Jews: since, however little authority *we* may attach to these Jewish commentaries, or however we may suppose their authors to have, in

some instances, corrupted the Faith by vain glosses and unfounded traditions; yet, as affording proof that the Jews themselves did not at that time understand the general sense of Scripture otherwise than we do, they are certainly of great importance. Nothing, indeed, more clearly shews the inextricable difficulty to which the Jews are driven, in trying to get rid of this argument, than the absurd doctrine which they have, in later times, endeavoured to establish, of *two Messiahs*, (a suffering and a triumphant one,) in order to explain those passages which are irreconcilable with their favourite expectation of a temporal Prince:—"by which monstrous fiction," as it has been admirably observed, "they have at once justified us, and given sentence against themselves."

Another stumblingblock, which obstructed the reception of the Gospel among the Jews, was the admission of the Gentiles to a participation of its benefits.

But here again this perverse and obstinate people stand condemned, by authority from which they cannot, consistently with their own principles, appeal. Their Scriptures plainly declared, that Christ was to be a blessing *to all nations*, and described, in every possible variety of language, the benefits

which the Gentiles were to derive from his coming. These passages the interpreters already mentioned expound, as relating to the happiness which the Gentiles should experience, under the reign of the Messiah, and to their rejoicing in him as their King. But how could this be reconciled with a notion that our Lord was to deliver the Jews only, and lead them to the subjugation of all other nations? Or how could the Gentiles rejoice in him, if all the benefit they were to derive from his coming, were that of being subjected to the Jewish nation? Was it not evident, then, that he was to be a King, altogether different from other kings; not an earthly potentate, not a prince of this world; but a deliverer of both Jews and Gentiles from the bondage of sin and misery, a spiritual Conqueror and Deliverer, an universal blessing to the whole race of mankind?

A third objection, equally futile with the other two, was urged against our Lord, that he appeared as the Destroyer of the Mosaic Law; that Law, which the Jews held to be of perpetual obligation.

Our Lord, however, most truly asserted, that "he came not to destroy the Law, but "to fulfil it[c]:" and nothing but wilful blind-

[c] Matt. v. 17.

ness could have prevented the Jews from perceiving this; since in doing that, by which alone the Mosaic Law was rendered efficacious even as to its past operation, Christ did indeed fulfil it in the strictest sense; although by the very act of thus fulfilling it, all its future operation was superseded and annulled. But it was a leading error of the Jews, that they regarded the mere outward performance of the Law as efficacious *in itself*, without reference to its spiritual intent, or to the great object pointed out in its most prominent Institutions, the Redeemer of mankind. Thus "their minds were blinded;" and this was "the vail upon their heart[d]," which the Apostle Paul earnestly endeavoured to remove, that they might attain to a right understanding of the purport of the Ceremonial Law. Yet even upon this point, their most approved Interpreters had formed correcter notions; and frequently enlarged upon the spiritual signification of their Ritual, in a manner which ought to have prevented the Jews from so gross a misconception of its meaning. Indeed the whole of the Mosaic Dispensation so clearly indicated the necessity of something more efficacious for the forgiveness of sins, than the bare out-

[d] 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.

ward acts which it enjoined; and was so evidently founded upon the great principle of the necessity of a vicarious atonement of greater value than any sacrifices which man could offer; that the Jews cannot but be regarded as inexcusable, in overlooking the very foundation of their Covenant with God, and degrading their Religion to a mere system of unavailing and insignificant Ordinances.

Yet another point, which created in their minds a strong prejudice against the Gospel, was the great doctrine of our Lord's Divinity. This they continually alleged as a sufficient justification of their holding him in abhorrence. "For a good work," said they, "we "stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and "because that thou, being a man, makest "thyself God[e]."

But that he did not, in this instance, arrogate to himself any pretensions which had not their foundations in the Jewish Scriptures, is a fact which our Lord placed in a very striking point of view, when he put that question to the Pharisees, respecting the Messiah, "If David, then, call him Lord, "how is he his Son[f]?"—Neither was this any new or strange doctrine, to the most ancient Interpreters in the Jewish Church;

[e] John x. 33. [f] Matt. xxii. 45.

since there are many passages in the Chaldee Paraphrases, the writings of Philo, and the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, wherein the Divinity of the promised Messiah is asserted in terms so clear and unequivocal, that an argument has thence been alleged of no inconsiderable weight, to prove the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, against heretical Christians, as well as against infidel Jews.

Thus it appears, that the whole system of Jewish Infidelity originated in a perversion of Scripture, in the misapplication of those sacred Oracles, which were given to the Jews for the preservation of the Truth, and for communicating to Mankind the knowledge of the promised Redeemer. The Prophets had delineated, in the fullest manner and with the most circumstantial precision, the character, the office, and the personal dignity of the Messiah. The most ancient and approved Interpreters of the Jewish Church had also expounded the Prophecies relating to him according to that plain and obvious sense, in which they have ever been understood by the Christian world. But the Scribes and Rulers of the Synagogue had mixed with the written Word a multitude of unauthorized traditions, or fanciful in-

ventions, inconsistent with the genuine doctrines of the Scriptures. Hence there prevailed many pernicious errors among the Jewish people, at the time of our Lord's appearance: and although we read not of such very extravagant notions respecting the Messiah, at that period, as have since been current among the Jews of later times; yet it is evident, that they had even then so far departed from the representations given of him in their Scriptures, as not to know him when he appeared among them.

This, however, could not have been the case, had not views of *temporal* interest or ambition so entirely engrossed their thoughts, as to lead them obstinately to resist whatever opposed their secular expectations, and to despise the precious promises of the Gospel, which are purely of a *spiritual* nature. "*The* "*God of this world had blinded their minds*, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of "Christ should shine unto them[g];" so that their own Scriptures became a snare to them, and even their faith in God's Word was perverted to the purposes of apostasy and unbelief.

But whatever might have been the re-

[g] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

mote cause of these prejudices, which gradually took possession of their minds and indisposed them for the reception of the Gospel; we cannot but regard them as almost lost to all sense of Religion, and as wilful opponents to the revealed will of God, when we read of their stubborn rejection of the Christian *miracles*, and of their blasphemy in ascribing those of our Lord himself to the agency of Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils. Where could the Evil Spirit find fitter agents than such men for his malignant purposes? Hence our Lord expressly addresses them as children of the Devil:—"Ye are of your Father the Devil, "and the lusts of your Father will ye do[h]." Their own Lawgiver, Moses, had verified his Divine mission, by the same species of proof which, in the case of Christ and his Apostles, they so perversely resisted. The power of working miracles, in confirmation of an alleged commission from God, was therefore evidence, which they had ever been taught to admit as incontrovertible, and on which, by the experience of ages, they had been authorized most confidently to rely. Under such circumstances, we may well be asto-

[h] John viii. 44.

nished at their unparalleled hardness of heart. To deny the performance of these wonderful works, was impossible. They saw them with their eyes: they could not but believe them: they even *acknowledged* their reality and truth:—"What do we?" said they, "for this man doth many miracles;" and, "if we let him thus alone, all men will "believe on him[i]:" and again of the Apostles Peter and John, "What shall we do to these "men? for that indeed a notable miracle "hath been done by them, is manifest to all "them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we can-"not deny it[k]."

Here we see delineated to the life, the characters of determined unbelievers and wilful impugners of the truth: nor can a stronger proof be given of that spirit of obstinacy and infatuation, by which the Prince of darkness is sometimes suffered to cloud the understandings, and to corrupt the hearts, of those who are already disposed to yield to his wicked suggestions.

Nevertheless, in this first and most astonishing instance of infidelity under the Christian Dispensation, the rejection of the Messiah by those of his own nation, ("to whom per-

[i] John xi. 47, 48. [k] Acts iv. 16.

" tained the adoption, and the glory, and the " covenants, and the giving of the law, and " the service of God, and the promises[1];") we may, if we contemplate it in a just point of view, discover abundant topics for the confirmation of our Faith. The grievous offence of the Jews, in despising the Gospel and " crucifying the Lord of glory," and the judgments poured out upon them in punishment of that offence, accomplished, in a very striking manner, many remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament, predicting events than which nothing could seem to be more improbable, according to all human expectation. We may observe also, how wonderfully every effort of the Jews to crush the Gospel in its infancy, and to subvert the foundations on which it stood, did, in effect, contribute to its stability and increase. In all their contumelious treatment of our Blessed Saviour, and in all the sufferings which they inflicted upon him, they unwittingly fulfilled the very Scriptures, which they would fain have wrested to a totally different meaning. Little did they suppose, that his humiliation was to lead him to glory; that his ignominious death was to effect the great pur-

[1] Rom. ix. 4.

pose of his mission; that, by his victory over the grave, he was to become "the Cap- "tain of our salvation[m]," to "lead captivity "captive[n]," and to obtain a title far surpassing all that their imaginations had formed, that of "King of kings," and "Lord of "lords[o]."

In the whole of this wonderful procedure, did the Almighty signally display his overruling power and providence, for the accomplishment of his gracious purpose, the Redemption of mankind: and what stronger evidence can we desire than this, that whenever the efforts of our great spiritual Enemy are permitted to take their course, it is only that he may experience, in the end, a more entire defeat?

However painful, therefore, may be the task of thus tracing the perverseness of men, in resisting the gracious proceedings of their Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ for their salvation; let us not be discouraged from pursuing our researches:—but let us be assured, that the more we develope the machinations of the evil-minded in pursuit of their object, the more shall we strengthen our own faith, by observing the

[m] Heb. ii. 10. [n] Eph. iv. 8. [o] Rev. xix. 16.

futility of their endeavours; and the more abundant proofs shall we discover of God's infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in confounding their devices, and making "all "things work together for good[p]," to them that love him, and wait for his salvation.

[p] Rom. viii. 28.

SERMON IV.

PSALM ii. 1.

Why do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

ALTHOUGH the Prophecies of the Old Testament clearly foretell the accession of the Gentiles to the kingdom of Christ, yet they frequently intimate, that that great event was not to take place without considerable opposition and resistance. Among other passages to this effect, the rage of the "Heathen "against the Lord and against his Anointed" is prophetically set forth, in the words of the Text, by the Royal Psalmist; who declares it however to be a "vain thing," and, in the close of the Psalm, predicts the triumph of the Messiah over all his opponents. So evidently was this prophecy accomplished, in the opposition which the Gospel at first experienced from Heathen as well as from Jewish rulers, that we find it cited by the Apostles themselves as descriptive of that event: "Lord, thou art God, which hast

"made heaven and earth, and the sea, and "all that therein is: who by the mouth of "thy servant David hast said, Why did the "Heathen rage, and the people imagine a "vain thing? The kings of the earth stood "up, and the rulers were gathered together "against the Lord, and against his Christ. "For of a truth, against thy holy Child Jesus, "whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and "Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the "people of Israel, were gathered together, "for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy "counsel determined before to be done[q]."

The case of the *Jews*, in "crucifying the "Lord of glory," and their increasing hatred to the Gospel from that period to the destruction of Jerusalem, have been already considered. We are now to enter upon an inquiry into the conduct of the *Heathen*, whose efforts to suppress Christianity were not less violent and impetuous than those of the Jews.

During our Lord's Ministry, the Gospel was not preached, expressly, to the Gentiles; his personal commission extending, as he himself declared, only "to the lost sheep of "the house of Israel[r]." Nevertheless, some

[q] Acts iv. 24—28.

[r] Matt. xv. 24.

individuals among the Heathen had opportunities of hearing his doctrine, and seeing the wonderful works which he performed. Our Lord abode frequently, if not for the most part, in "Galilee of the Gentiles." In Cana of Galilee he wrought his first public miracle, and manifested forth his glory. On the Centurion's servant at Capernaum, he gave proof of his Divine power. By his miracle in driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple and purifying the outer Court, the Court of the Gentiles, from Jewish profanations, he intimated that all nations had an interest in his holy religion as well as the Jews. By healing the Syrophenician woman, he vouchsafed a similar intimation: and to the woman of Samaria he expressly declared the universal extent of the Gospel. In these and other instances, testimony was borne to the Gentiles of the gracious purpose of his coming into the world, and of the extent of the authority with which he was invested.

It also appears, that some of the most important facts recorded by the Evangelists were known by Heathen authors of the same period; whence we are led to infer, that they must have been matters of public notoriety even in the centre of the Roman Empire.

Nor indeed can we reasonably suppose otherwise, when we consider that it was required of the Provincial Governors to transmit to the Emperors faithful accounts of all important occurrences within their respective districts; and when we further consider, that the transactions relative to our Lord and his disciples appear to have been regarded with a great degree of political jealousy and alarm.

After our Lord's mission on earth was ended, and when the Apostles were endued with power from on high to go forth and preach the word, St. Peter was the favoured Apostle on whom devolved the duty of first opening the door of Faith to the Gentiles: and, in admitting Cornelius and his household into the Christian Church, he exercised the power of the Keys committed to him by our Lord for that purpose. But the first *general* offer of the Gospel to the Heathen world was made by Paul and Barnabas, after the repeated rejection of it by the unbelieving Jews. On this occasion, it is said, that "the "Gentiles were glad, and glorified the word "of the Lord[c]." Too soon, however, many of these favoured Gentiles were induced by

[c] Acts xiii. 48.

the Jews to turn against the Apostles, and to assist in acts of hostility against the Christian cause. When Paul preached to the polite and learned Athenians, the boast of the Gentile world, he was treated contemptuously by the admired Philosophers of the day, as a "babbler," and "a setter forth of strange "gods, because he preached unto them Jesus "and the resurrection[d]." Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, would not listen to the Apostle's defence, but, when Paul was about to speak, interrupted him, and dismissed both him and his accusers, without further inquiry[e]. Felix trembled at his preaching, but resisted his own inward conviction[f]. Festus, his successor, slightingly spake of the superstition of the disciples, in believing Jesus to be risen from the dead; and either from ignorance or disregard of the momentous truths which St. Paul delivered, reviled him as a madman[g]. Various were the hardships and the indignities, which the Apostles experienced from the Gentiles, thus acting in concert with the hardened and unbelieving Jews in opposition to the word of truth.

It appears, however, that in some instances the Christians of the Apostolic age suffered

[d] Acts xvii. 18. [e] xviii. 17. [f] xxiv. 25. [g] xvi. 24.

persecution from Heathen rulers, by being ignorantly confounded with the Jews; whose turbulent and seditious conduct frequently provoked very rigorous chastisement from the Roman Governors. This was particularly instanced in the reign of Claudius. Indeed, a proof of something like a favourable disposition towards Christians is recorded even of Tiberius, who is said to have proposed the introduction of Jesus (who was crucified in his reign) into the number of the Heathen Deities. Once likewise it is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, that "the Churches "had rest," and, in consequence of that rest, "were multiplied[h]." But this, perhaps, may rather be considered as a cessation of the Jewish hostility towards them, than as a proof of lenity on the part of the Heathen, who were at this time, during the tyranny of Caligula, engaged in a severe persecution of the Jews.

But, whatever intervals of rest the Church might enjoy from direct persecution on the part of the ruling powers, it is certain, (as the Jews at Rome declared to St. Paul,) that "every where it was spoken against[i]," and was discouraged by all possible means. It

[h] Acts ix. 31. [i] Acts xxviii. 22.

derived, at first, but little encouragement from persons distinguished for learning, power, or influence. Nay, it had to struggle with the most determined opposition from many of these: and in proportion as its inestimable benefits began to be diffused among mankind, the virulence of its opponents seemed likewise to increase. Converts, indeed, were made in considerable numbers: "the Lord "adding daily to the Church such as should "be saved[k]," or, "as many as were ordained "to eternal life[l]," that is, all who were disposed to acknowledge their want of a Redeemer, and to embrace the Gospel terms of salvation. But the pride, the prejudices, and the corrupt interests of persons in exalted stations, were not to be easily overcome; whilst the malignant passions or hardened insensibility of the ignorant multitude, disinclined *them* likewise to listen to instructors, whose "preaching was not with enticing words "of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of "the Spirit and of power[m]."

Thus much we collect from the narratives of the Apostles, confirmed, for the most part, by contemporary historians of established credit.

[k] Acts ii. 47. [l] Acts xiii. 48. [m] 1 Cor. ii. 4.

In reviewing the eventful period which extends from the close of St. Luke's narrative to the reign of Constantine, the limits of our present design will only admit of a few cursory observations on the more prominent features of Ecclesiastical History, for the purpose of exhibiting in the most striking point of view the peculiar characteristics of Heathen Infidelity.

Ten grievous persecutions did the Christians suffer, under the Heathen Emperors, within a space of 250 years.

The first who led the way in these atrocious attacks upon the professors of the Faith, was the Emperor Nero, a monster of iniquity, well worthy to appear at the head of the bloody list of persecutors, and to distinguish himself as the chief agent of Satan. No motive is assigned for his cruelty in this instance, but either genuine hatred of goodness, or a dastardly hope of averting from himself the execration due to his enormities. His pretext, in charging upon these devoted victims the crime of incendiaries, was too palpably unfounded to gain credit even among the enemies of the Gospel. Pagans themselves blushed to behold such baseness: they deplored the sufferings of the Martyrs; and inveighed against the scandal-

ous injustice of their fate. This persecution, however, appears to have continued, with little abatement, nearly three years; and to have extended to every part of the Empire. Among its numerous victims were included those two illustrious Apostles of the Gentile world, St. Peter and St. Paul.

The Christians enjoyed a considerable interval of rest, during the succeeding reigns, particularly under the mild and equitable government of Vespasian and Titus. They were also distinguished by the signal protection of Providence, in their escape from the terrible destruction of Jerusalem; the Almighty providing them a secure retreat, and manifesting the increase of his favour towards them, in proportion as Judaism was hastening to dissolution. The rapid progress of the Gospel under these circumstances sufficiently refutes the absurd opinions of Infidel writers, that the Christians sought persecution, and owed their success to the impolitic opposition that was made to their cause.

But trials more fiery awaited them under the reign of Domitian, a second Nero in almost every feature. For this persecution no motive is assigned but the prodigious increase of converts to Christianity, and their refusal to pay Divine honours to the Emperor.

The extent and severity of this persecution may be conceived, from the Emperor's including among its victims even his chief ministers and his nearest kindred and relations. The Evangelist St. John (according to Tertullian and other authors of credit) was sentenced to martyrdom at this time, but miraculously preserved from death. This period was also memorable for the martyrdoms of Timothy, Onesimus, Dionysius the Areopagite, Antipas, and other eminent Christian worthies. Neither did the Jews escape the fury of this merciless tyrant; but experienced, from an Adversary as bitter and implacable as themselves, a still further punishment of their rejection of the Son of God.

The third Persecution commenced in the reign of Trajan, and was continued in that of Adrian. The fourth prevailed under Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius. These two Persecutions are remarkable, on account of the reputed characters of the Emperors in whose reigns they took place; all of whom are represented as distinguished for the mildness of their dispositions and the excellence of their moral conduct. Indeed, the instructions of Trajan to Pliny, the rescript of Adrian, and the Edicts of both the Antonini, evidently betray a consciousness of the extreme injust-

ice of the proceedings which had been instituted against the Christians. But it should seem, that, from a bigoted attachment to Heathenism, or from apprehensions for the safety of the State, they were induced to lend a ready ear to the foul and slanderous imputations continually urged against these innocent victims; and to sanction such outrages as were disgraceful to a civilized people. Hence, notwithstanding the panegyricks of their historians, we find the reigns of these Emperors marked with a spirit of sanguinary rage and fury, scarcely inferior to those of Nero and Domitian, and perhaps even more extensive in its effects. The venerable names of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin, stand foremost on the numerous list of Martyrs during these persecutions.

In the third century, the storm raged with greater frequency, at least, if not with greater violence; six several Persecutions being recorded in the space of less than one hundred years. The Persecution under Severus, in which Irenæus is supposed to have suffered, called forth the eloquent Apology of Tertullian, and the admirable labours of Clemens Alexandrinus and Minucius Felix, in defence of the Christian Faith, which none can read without horror and indignation against its

atrocious enemies. That under Maximin appears to have arisen from motives of personal resentment, or of personal dread; but was soon terminated by the death of the Tyrant himself. The Emperor Decius not only set on foot another dreadful Persecution, but carried his enmity so far as to threaten with death every subordinate officer in his Empire, who should presume to remit its terrors. Valerian, after deluding the Christians by an extraordinary show of benignity, revived, at the instigation of one of his courtiers, (a furious and bigoted Heathen,) all the horrors which had marked the reign of his predecessor Decius; and rendered his name infamous, by the martyrdom of Cyprian and other illustrious witnesses to the Truth. The same disposition discovered itself in the Emperor Aurelian, whose sudden and violent death prevented, however, the execution of his cruel purpose. But the climax of Persecution was carried to its utmost height in the reign of Dioclesian; when the fury of the Pagan world, instigated by Galerius and other inveterate enemies of Christianity, was poured forth with unparalleled violence, and with a determined resolution (as it should seem) to extirpate, if possible, the whole race of Believers. In this Persecution, the utmost pains

were taken to compel Christians to deliver up to the Magistrates all their copies of the Holy Scriptures, that they might be publicly burnt, and every vestige of their Religion destroyed. But although this part of the Imperial Edict, together with that which respected the demolition of the Christian Churches, was executed with extreme rigour; yet such were the firmness and fidelity of the Christians, and such their profound reverence for the Sacred Writings, that many of them suffered the severest tortures, rather than comply with this Decree. Dark and disastrous, indeed, as this period of Ecclesiastical history appears, it is made illustrious by the writings of many zealous and successful defenders of the Truth, (Arnobius, Lactantius, and others,) who shrunk not from maintaining it against every effort to work its destruction.

Thus were the most unrelenting violence and cruelty exercised during three whole centuries, to crush the Gospel, and to compel mankind to bow down before those Idols, which, under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness, had obtained an establishment in every part of the Heathen world. Of the number of those who fell victims to these merciless persecutions, it is difficult to form a

calculation. But when we reflect upon the vast extent of the Roman Empire, (in every part of which Christianity had begun to take root,) and when we read of the strict injunctions given to the Governors of distant provinces, to carry these bloody Edicts into execution; we cannot doubt, that the slaughter "of them that were slain for the word of "God, and for the testimony which they "held[n]," must have been immense. Neither age nor sex, neither rank nor obscurity, afforded protection to these devoted victims. Menaces and persuasions, bribes and tortures, unheard of ingenuity in the invention of barbarous punishments, and savage stoicism in the infliction of them, were the means employed in this persevering, though unavailing, conflict with the powers of Heaven.

But it was not to violence alone that the Heathen trusted, for the overthrow of the Gospel. Calumny of the foulest kind was called in, to aid the infernal purpose.

Many of the slanderous accusations brought against the primitive Christians are of so disgusting and improbable a kind, that it were desirable to pass them over wholly in silence, did they not afford striking proofs of the igno-

[n] Rev. vi. 9.

rance, as well as the malice, of those by whom the Gospel was traduced. In addition to the inconsistent charges of credulity, superstition, enthusiasm, or brutish stupidity, on the one hand; and of obstinate unbelief, atheistical impiety, hypocrisy, and imposture, on the other; such was the strange misconception, or rather (as we must deem it) the wilful misrepresentation, of the Gospel, by its Heathen opponents, that they continually reviled its disciples, as murderers of infants, as cannibals, as addicted to incestuous practices, as pretenders to magic, as worshippers of the Sun, and as idolaters paying adoration to the grossest objects. Nothing of this kind was omitted, which could, by any possible perversion of the sacred doctrines of their Religion, be employed, to vilify the devoted objects of their hatred, and induce the ignorant multitude to regard them as the most infamous of mankind.

But, besides these fouler calumnies, (which may seem rather to have been addressed to the lowest of the vulgar, than to men of knowledge and understanding,) invectives of a higher strain, and sophistry of a more subtle description, were employed, to ensnare the minds of those upon whom baser arts might not prevail. Literary talents, of no

mean distinction, were exercised in endeavouring to defeat a system which threatened the downfall of the boasted Philosophy of the Heathen world, no less than the destruction of those superstitions with which Philosophers (however inconsistently with the character of honest men) deemed it expedient to impose upon the ignorant. Christianity, indeed, had no enemies more inveterate than the inflated and proud Philosophers, who had acquired, and were resolutely determined to maintain, possession of the public ear.

Few of the writings of these Sophists are now extant. But we may judge of their character and tendency, by the able vindications of the Christian Religion, to which they gave birth; since the unreserved freedom and boldness with which the Defenders of the Faith state the objections of its Adversaries, not only acquaint us with the nature of those objections, but remove all suspicions of any others having been advanced, of greater weight than those which they have refuted.

From these it is evident, that there was no want of talents or industry on the part of those who then laboured in the cause of Infidelity. The names of Celsus and Porphyry, the former an adept in the Epicurean, the latter in the Platonic school, have been

perpetuated in the writings of their respective antagonists, and handed down to posterity as memorable instances of ingenuity perversely applied to the worst of purposes. In them we have a sufficient specimen of the dispositions of those whose representatives they appear to have been in the support of falsehood: and whoever studies with attention the admirable refutations of these adversaries in the writings of Origen and Augustin, (both eminently skilled in the subtleties of the Philosophical School,) will perceive that they were Infidels of no mean abilities.

We may judge, therefore, of the danger to which the cause of Truth was exposed, by such a misapplication of learning, talents, and ingenuity, to the support of Sophistry and Error; and how extensive must have been its influence, in prejudicing the minds of weak, corrupt, and uninformed persons, against the Gospel: nor can we wonder at the honest vehemence and indignation, with which the eloquent Fathers of the primitive Church inveighed against such a prostitution of reason and knowledge, to the service of the great Adversary of mankind.

But in addition to the efforts of Persecution, Calumny, and Sophistry, Christianity

had likewise to contend against the artifices of Fraud and Imposture, exercised in support of declining Idolatry.

Accustomed to the grossest delusions of Heathen Priestcraft, the credulous people were easily led to admit the pretensions of every one who attempted to rival the inspired Preachers of the Gospel in the gift of Miracles. The wonder-working powers of Magic, or "the sleight of men, and cun-" ning craftiness whereby they lay in wait to " deceive," obtained with them no less easy credit than the strongest and best attested proofs of Divine interposition. Hence the reputation of the Impostor Simon Magus, of Apuleius, and of Apollonius Tyanæus; the works attributed to the last of whom were magnified by all possible means, and contributed, as it appears, to deceive many; although no record ever carried in itself more decisive proofs of falsehood and absurdity, than that which reports his achievements.

It is also to be remarked, that throughout the whole of this period, the Jews were unceasing in their efforts to stimulate the Heathen to this perpetual warfare with Truth. Notwithstanding the terrible judgments inflicted upon them for their unbelief and

hardness of heart; notwithstanding their inveterate hatred to the Gentiles, and their fellow-sufferings with the Christians in the earlier Persecutions of the Gospel by the Roman power, they still continued to rage against it with unabating violence. Nor can we suppose them to have been weak or impotent adversaries, however enslaved and oppressed by the Roman government;—since from their professed acquaintance with the principles of the Christian Faith, it is probable that they were regarded by the Heathen Philosophers as useful coadjutors in the grand design of effecting its overthrow. Thus did this infatuated people league even with their own bitterest enemies, in the cause of error and impiety!

But see the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, in confounding the devices of all these enemies to Truth, and bringing to nought the counsels of the ungodly. Before the end of Claudius's reign, the Christians were become so numerous as to give alarm to the Roman Government. Not long after, apprehensions were entertained in the city of Ephesus, that the temple of Diana was in danger, and its worshippers likely to be converted to the Gospel. Even in the reigns of Nero and Domitian they increased

to an astonishing degree. Under Trajan they were more numerous, in the distant province of Bithynia, than all the other inhabitants: and under Adrian, a large and populous kingdom was added to the Church. Even in the idolatrous land of Egypt, they were not inferior in numbers, or in consequence, to the votaries of Paganism. One Emperor being disposed to tolerate them, was assured that, if he did so, all men would become Christians, and the Heathen temples would be deserted. Another assigned this as a reason for renewing the persecution of them. At last, when Constantine was invested with the Imperial purple, it was computed that a majority of the inhabitants throughout the whole Empire professed the Christian faith. Thus, from a beginning apparently feeble and obscure, did the Gospel attain to a strength and extent unparalleled in the annals of mankind. According to our Lord's prophetical parable, the grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds, grew up to be the greatest among herbs, and became a tree; so that the birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof[o].

But here the question returns upon us,

[o] Matt. xiii. 32.

"*Why* did the Heathen so furiously rage "together; and *why* did the people imagine "this vain thing?"

Notwithstanding the many plausible excuses which have, by some insidious writers, been alleged for the Heathen; it seems impossible to acquit them of *wilful* opposition to the Truth, in their rejection of the Gospel. The sentiments with which they heard the Gospel were, indeed, extremely different from those of the Jewish people, since their prejudices ran in an almost contrary direction. They had, through a series of ages, suffered under extreme ignorance of spiritual Truths: Truths, which they could not possibly discern, through the clouds of darkness and corruption by which their view of them was intercepted. In this respect, their case appears to deserve compassion, and their incredulity to admit of more extenuation than that of the Jews, who were trained to the knowledge of Divine Truth from the earliest period. But, on the other hand, with such an acknowledged inability to help themselves, the Heathen appear altogether inexcusable in rejecting the gracious offer of the Gospel, and adhering to their own crude and incoherent systems. The Jews might plead that they had already a religion of

Divine authority. The more enlightened among the Gentiles could make no such plea; having no evidence whatever to produce in support of their superstitions. If the Jews, therefore, on the one hand, were inexcusable in sinning against their better knowledge; what shall we say for the Heathen, on the other hand, who had nothing to set in competition with the Gospel, but the vain and flimsy devices of human imagination?

St. Paul directs us to the only right view of the different causes which led the Jews and the Gentiles to oppose the Gospel, when he states, that it was "unto the Jews a stum-"blingblock, and unto the Greeks foolish-"ness[p]." It was to the former "a stumbling-block;" because they had framed expectations of it, totally different from its real character and design:—it was to the latter "foolish-"ness;" because it flattered not their pride and vanity, but tended to lower the pretensions of human wisdom, and to pull down the lofty systems, which presumptuous imagination had set up.

Hence the Gentile Philosophers despised the simplicity of the Gospel, and, still more, the meek and lowly character of its heavenly

[p] 1 Cor. i. 23.

Founder. But, when brought to the test of sober reasoning, they were utterly at a loss to allege substantial arguments against either the one or the other. In the life and conduct of our Lord and his Apostles, they could find nothing to blame; in the evidences of their power, nothing to oppose; in the truth of their doctrine, nothing to controvert. In all these points, they saw that it was in vain to contrast with them any of the most distinguished characters of the Pagan world, whether heroes, legislators, or sages.

It must, however, be allowed, that for a considerable length of time, the Heathen appear to have confounded Christianity with Judaism, and to have persecuted both without discrimination. This might arise either from ignorance of the distinctive characters of each, or from observing that both were equally hostile to Idolatry. But when they saw that the Jews themselves were persecutors of the Gospel, would it not have been reasonable to infer, that the two Religions must be, in some respects, of different character, notwithstanding their seeming connection with and dependence on each other? If the Heathen had duly considered this, and had honestly used the means which were in

their power of examining the claims of each, they might have perceived, that although both were evidently of Divine original, yet the objections of the Jews to the Gospel were of no real weight against the preponderating evidences of its truth, and that their rejection of it proceeded from the most mistaken views of its design and tendency. In short, had they, like the Bereans whose praise is recorded by St. Luke, "searched the Scrip-"tures daily, whether those things were so[q]," they could hardly have remained ignorant of the grounds of Jewish infidelity, or of "the "many infallible proofs" by which the truth of the Gospel was established.

But, far from doing this, the Pagans readily fell in with the worst prejudices of the Jews; imbibing their contempt for the low estate of the first preachers of the Gospel, their dislike to the purity and perfection of its moral precepts, and their disrelish for the spiritual truths which it contained. Like them, they refused to receive the doctrine of Atonement and reconciliation to the Divine favour through Christ; and deemed it irrational that Divine honours should be paid to a crucified Redeemer. They considered not, that the more despised and ill-treated

[q] Acts xvii. 11.

our Saviour was, the more was the Divine power manifested in the success of his Religion. Yet their great Philosopher, Plato, might have taught them, that if a perfect character, even one sent down from Heaven, were to appear among men, he would, in all probability, experience such treatment as had been shown towards our blessed Lord himself. Indeed, the virtuous Socrates was, in some degree, an instance of the injuries which a good man must expect to receive from a corrupt and degenerate world. With what consistency then, could Heathen Philosophers allege the sufferings of our Lord or his Apostles as an argument against his Religion?

But the more enlightened amongst the Heathen seem chargeable with still greater perverseness than this; since, however ignorant they might be of true Religion, they could not but perceive the absurdity of their own Theology. They knew that this would not bear investigation; that it had no clear pretensions to Divine origin; that it was a mass of the grossest error and corruption, such as no man of understanding and reflection could believe. Their greatest Philosophers, before the coming of Christ, not only knew this, but confessed their inability to

discover religious Truth, and their earnest hope, amounting almost to a strong persuasion, that the Deity would vouchsafe a Revelation from heaven, to "guide their feet into "the way of peace." What new light, then, had broke in upon the Philosophers of the Christian age, or what new evidences to prove the Divine authority of Paganism had been discovered, which might excuse their obstinacy in still adhering to it, and refusing to examine with impartiality and attention such a Revelation as the Gospel, accompanied with so many external and internal proofs of its heavenly origin, and so well calculated to satisfy them upon every point, respecting which they had hitherto remained in doubt insuperable, and in the most distressing solicitude?

Again, the traditions scattered throughout the Heathen world, and the remnants of ancient Prophecy preserved among them; the intercourse likewise which had always more or less, subsisted between the Jews and the Gentiles; and the benefit which, in later times, they might have derived from the Septuagint translation of the Holy Scriptures; were circumstances which ought to have led them,—nay, which did lead many of them,—to expect the coming of the Mes-

siah; and this expectation ought to have disposed them to think favourably of the Gospel, or at least to be extremely cautious of "neglecting" what might prove to be the "great salvation" which they desired. But the pride and arrogance of the Philosophers, the avarice and imposture of the Priesthood, and the gross corruption of the People, appear to have counteracted all these inducements to give it a fair and dispassionate consideration.

The most striking instance, however, of the perverseness of the Heathen, as well as of the Jews, is their rejection of the Christian *Miracles*. It has already been remarked, that the frequency of spurious Miracles among the Heathen might probably operate to the disadvantage of Christianity, by giving scope to impostors for the delusion of the ignorant, who were unable to discern between true and false pretensions to the gift of Miracles. But the same cause which produced this blind *credulity* and want of discernment in the unthinking vulgar, appears to have produced in the Philosophers of that period a stubborn and equally undiscerning *incredulity*, no less unfavourable to their reception of the Gospel. Sensible that the systems of *Paganism* had no solid foun-

dation in Miracles which could be regarded as of Divine operation, they either hastily concluded that *all* such pretences were false and unfounded, or if in any case something supernatural had really been effected, that it was to be attributed, in common with the reputed prodigies of Heathenism, to the power of *Magic;* in which it is probable that most of the Heathen Philosophers were inclined to believe.

But in either of these points of view, how inexcusable does the unbelief of these pretenders to wisdom and knowledge appear! If they really believed in Magic, here was surely enough to undeceive them, as to the power of evil spirits; whose dominion, whatever it might be, was manifestly counteracted and subdued by the Miracles of the Gospel. Our Lord's argument was decisive, against every objection of this kind, "If Satan cast "out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand?" —If, on the other hand, they were doubtful as to the reality of the Miracles, why did they not examine the evidences of their having been performed; a just comparison of which, with those alleged in behalf of impostors, would instantly have shewn the unreasonableness of their scepticism, and the solidity of the Gospel pretensions? Such,

however, was their inconsistency in this respect, that they were ready to uphold the ridiculous pretensions of their own impostors, Apuleius, Vespasian, and above all Apollonius, (set up, by Philosophers themselves, as the professed rival of our blessed Saviour,) whilst they rejected the Christian Miracles, attested by multitudes in every part of the Empire, and accompanied with such proof as the most rigorous scrutiny was never able to invalidate. But this, again, is a never-failing token of "the working of Satan," that he deludes his children "with lying wonders, "and with all deceivableness of unright-"eousness[r]," whilst he blinds them to the truth, and disables them from discerning between light and darkness: so that they become equally a prey to credulity and incredulity, manifesting a propensity to cherish error, and to depart from sound knowledge.

Labouring under this infatuation, it will appear the less surprising that the heathen ridiculed Christians for encountering hardships of every kind, and even martyrdom itself, in their profession of the Faith. They perceived not, that this was a most convincing proof, not only of the sincerity of the

[r] 2 Thess. ii. 10.

sufferers, (for even enthusiasts and madmen may be *sincere* in their professions,) but of the truth of the Gospel itself; which being founded upon such facts as men's senses were fully competent to ascertain, it was wholly incredible that the Christians should have made such sacrifices in attestation of those facts, but upon a clear conviction, nay, an absolute knowledge, of their certainty:—and this being admitted, the truth of the doctrines arising out of those facts became indisputably established.

But, in order to bring discredit upon the Christian cause, the Heathen acted another dishonest part, in attributing to its *true* Disciples the misconduct and perverse opinions of *Heretics;* notwithstanding the acknowledged virtues of the sound members of the Church, and the pains which were taken to put away from them all evil doers, to exclude false brethren, and to disclaim all communion with them until they should revoke their errors, and, by the blameless tenor of their lives, prove themselves worthy of readmission into the bosom of the Church.

Not content, however, with these misrepresentations, the Heathen boldly charged the whole body of the Christian disciples with *Atheism*, for refusing to worship the Gods of

the State, vain Idols, and senseless Deities, the offspring of human invention. But it required little penetration to perceive that this charge of Atheism could not possibly be substantiated against the Christians, till it was ascertained, who worshipped the *true* God, the Christian, or the Heathen? He, in fact, is the Atheist, who is without the true God: for, since there is no other God beside Him, all who are without Him, are without God, or Atheists. Christians, therefore, were well entitled to retaliate this charge upon the Heathen. This the Heathen could not, or would not, see; but persisted in reviling Christians as Atheists, for not worshipping imaginary beings, Gods of their own creation, persons whose very existence the most learned among them would not have undertaken to prove.

But, in truth, the Heathen hated the Gospel, because it would not admit of any coalition with their superstitions. "The Pagan "Religion," (says a very learned Writer[s],) "was an aggregate of several distinct Reli- "gions, derived from so many pretended "Revelations, which were not laid on the "foundation of one another, nor were they "raised on the destruction of one another."

[s] Bp. Warburton.

It was, therefore, no regular system of Theology; it had no profession of Faith, no fixed principles, by which it could be tried. Hence arose that *inter-community* of Gods, which prevailed among different nations, and the belief in local or tutelary Deities, any one, or all, of whom it was deemed lawful to worship, at different times or places, according to every man's choice, predilection, or personal circumstances. Had Christianity been compatible with this latitudinarian system, probably it would have been received with more complacency among the Heathen; who would not, perhaps, have scrupled to introduce the worship of Christ, in conjunction with those Divinities which they already acknowledged. But since it claimed to be received as the *only* true Religion, for which all others must absolutely be renounced, the Heathen became offended at it, and sought its destruction. That "there was none other name under "Heaven given among men, whereby we "must be saved[t]," except that of Jesus Christ, they treated as an extravagant position. In this, however, as well as in the absurd notion, that God might be acceptably served by a variety of dissimilar, and even contradictory modes of Worship, they betrayed their igno-

[t] Acts iv. 12.

rance of that fundamental principle of all Religion, *obedience to the Divine Will.* "For "this cause," said our Blessed Lord, "came I "into the world, that I should bear witness "unto the truth[u]." Pilate contemptuously asked, "what is truth?" as if all religion were merely a political invention, with no real claim to acceptance on its own account. The Heathen in general seem to have regarded it with the same indifference; otherwise, an attentive consideration must have convinced them, that if the Gospel were true, their own Religion must be false; and that if God had therein revealed His Will, that *alone* must be the Religion, which man was in duty bound to accept, unless any other could be produced of equal, or superior, authority.

But the Heathen were still more inexcusable in attempting a vindication of Paganism, even when they perceived its rapid decline and its approaching downfall, notwithstanding all the efforts of human power to support its tottering fabric; when they saw its Sacrifices and Idols falling daily into discredit; when the cessation of Oracles was generally complained of, even by their most zealous votaries; and when some of the Emperors themselves alleged these things, as reasons for their

[u] John xviii. 37.

persecution of the Christians. It was indeed made one principal ground of argument against Christians, by Heathen writers, that all the public calamities which befell the state were to be attributed to the increasing influence of the Gospel, which shook Paganism to its very foundations, and brought down the vengeance of its offended Deities. These testimonies, however, to the triumph of the Gospel, did but serve its advocates with fresh arguments in its defence, and fresh answers to the invectives of its adversaries; the imbecility of whose attacks they contributed to expose in a more convincing manner.

Indeed, whatever excuses we might be willing to offer for the Heathen, during this period, on the score of ignorance, error, or involuntary prejudice, are rendered inadmissible, when we consider the indefatigable exertions of the Fathers of the primitive Church, to reclaim them from their errors, to clear up their doubts, to enlighten their understandings, and to rectify their principles, by removing every objection which could be urged against the Gospel, and by setting its evidences before them in the strongest light. The admirable lives of these ornaments of the Christian Faith, were sufficient to command attention and respect, from the

wise and good: whilst their invaluable writings in its defence, their masterly arguments and eloquent exhortations, the solemn attestations to its truth which they gave, in heroically and cheerfully submitting to the most cruel sufferings for its sake, and the Miracles which, according to the best authority, were occasionally wrought for its confirmation, even after the Apostolic age, leave the Heathen world without excuse, in refusing to listen to such instructors. Still less can we apologize for their unbelief, when we consider that several of their ablest Philosophers (such as Dionysius, Origen, Arnobius, and others, who were little likely to be deluded by "cunningly-devised fables,") acknowledged and gloried in their conversion to the Faith; whilst its most learned and acute adversaries pretended not to disprove the *Facts* upon which it rested, although they treated it with scorn and insult.

Thus have we considered the vain efforts of the Heathen, during three successive centuries, to extirpate Christianity. From these we seem necessarily led to infer, that as more than human power was manifested in its support, so more than human malice and ingenuity conspired to project its destruction. The machinations of the Evil Spirit appear

to be conspicuously displayed, in the unremitting efforts of those wretched victims of his malice and of their own perverseness, who, though "sitting in darkness and in the sha-"dow of death," (a state to which they had unhappily been reduced, by his too successful efforts,) were yet so insensible to their melancholy condition, as to shut their eyes against the light when it began to shine upon them.

But it is at the same time encouraging to reflect, that, however successful our great spiritual Enemy may be, among those who are "willingly ignorant of his devices," yet his efforts are in vain directed against the ultimate object of our hopes and expectations. The triumph of the Gospel, after three centuries of unparalleled conflict with the powers of darkness, leads us to a joyful anticipation of its future glories. But we have many proofs yet to produce, of malice never to be extinguished in the present state of things, as well as of strength and subtlety, only to be overruled by Divine Agency. Though we have now traced Christianity to its first happy establishment under Imperial protection, we shall find that Paganism "is not dead, but "sleepeth:"—soon will it awake, and make fresh efforts to invigorate its decaying powers. Nevertheless, though "the Kings of the earth

" stand up, and the rulers take counsel to-
" gether against the Lord and against his
" Anointed, He that dwelleth in Heaven
" shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall
" have them in derision." For " the Lord is
" King, the earth may be glad thereof."—
" He will give strength and power unto his
" people. Blessed be God!"

SERMON V.

LUKE x. 18.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

OUR Lord has no where, perhaps, intimated his absolute power over Satan, in stronger terms than these. His disciples having expressed astonishment at their success in casting out Devils through his name, he adverts to the entire overthrow of the Evil Spirit, as the certain consequence of his coming into the world: "I beheld Satan," says he, "as "lightning fall from heaven:"—"I be- "held him," that is, "when it was preor- "dained that I should come as the Redeemer "of mankind; and foresaw the annihilation "of his power, as the certain consequence of "that event. Whatever attempts therefore "he may still make to uphold his cause, they "are only the efforts of expiring rage and "malice; and the proofs which you now "have of the influence of my name, in dis-

" possessing him from the bodies of men, are " a token and pledge of the deliverance of " their souls from his cruel bondage, and of " the total destruction of his spiritual ty- " ranny."

The full effect of this great and powerful Redemption is not, indeed, to be expected, till the time when our Lord shall have "put " all enemies under his feet[x]." But in the mean while, many are the instances in which this his preeminence has been signally displayed, and the kingdom of Satan been shaken to its very centre.

To one of the most remarkable of these, the downfall of ancient Paganism, some have supposed our Lord more particularly to refer in the words of the text: and there is the greater reason for supposing this, from the similar mode of expression which the Prophet Isaiah uses, in foretelling the overthrow of the idolatrous empire of Babylon; —"How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of " the morning[y]!" — Predictions of similar import, as to the connection between the dominion of Satan and the prevalence of Heathen impiety, are frequent in the Sacred Writings: and our Lord himself, in miraculously calling St. Paul to be a minister unto

[x] 1 Cor. xv. 25. [y] Isa. xiv. 12.

the Gentiles, expressly assigns it as the object of his mission, that he should turn men "from "the power of Satan unto God[z]."

The course of our inquiries has now brought us to the consideration of that memorable period, in which these predictions received their accomplishment; and during which the last formidable struggle was maintained between Christianity and Paganism in the Roman Empire; terminating in the utter discomfiture of this inveterate foe to the Gospel.

The conversion of Constantine was an event of singular importance to the interests of Christianity. Whether we give full credit to his own statement of the extraordinary circumstances by which it was effected, and which, natural or supernatural, are certainly not contradicted by any satisfactory evidence; or whether we incline to the less probable supposition of those who imagine him to have had a previous disposition to befriend Christianity, and to have committed a kind of pious fraud in feigning these circumstances, in order to give the greater sanction to his renunciation of Paganism; it matters little, as to the application of it to our present subject. Were it at all necessary, however, to the support of what we have to

[z] Acts xxvi. 18.

advance, it would not be difficult to shew, that the weight of evidence preponderates very considerably in favour of his sudden, and, perhaps, miraculous conversion; and since he certainly gave abundant proofs of the sincerity of his change, through the remainder of his life, we ought to be reluctant in supposing him to have been guilty of any wilful misrepresentation in his narrative of the event.—That Pagan Writers should be bitterly incensed against him, is naturally to be expected: and if modern Sceptics be inclined to arraign the partiality of his biographer Eusebius, ought they not to be suspicious, on the other hand, of such prejudiced historians as Julian and Zosimus? Is it not also highly improbable, that Constantine should hazard, without a full conviction of their truth, the solemn asseverations which he made respecting the immediate cause of his conversion; when, if false, they might easily have been disproved by a host of living witnesses?

These considerations have induced some of the most acute and impartial inquirers, to acquiesce in the truth of this event as recorded by Eusebius. But whatever opinion we may entertain upon this point; his profession of the Gospel, and his continued

favour to its disciples from the time of his professing it, are indisputable: and the signal providence of God, in raising up such an instrument in its support, is no less evident. The Edicts which he issued in its favour effected the complete establishment of Christianity as the national Religion. His restoration of church-property, his rebuilding of churches, his decrees for the observance of the Christian Sabbath, his endeavours to promote a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and the restraints imposed by him upon Heathen Worship, give us a picture of prosperity, in which, for the first time, we see the splendid predictions of the ancient Prophets verified, respecting the Church of Christ, that "Kings should be its nursing-fathers, and Queens its nursing-mothers[a]."

Let it not, however, be supposed, that even during this auspicious reign the Gospel was free from opposition. Philosophy daily felt its own influence declining; but it was too proud and stubborn to yield without a struggle. So much had been urged, with invincible energy, by Christian Writers, against its crude and incoherent systems, that Philosophers themselves began to be ashamed and confounded. Hence, we may

[a] Isa. xlix. 23.

observe, in their writings of this date, many vain attempts to gloss over the follies of Heathenism, to conceal its imperfections, and to reconcile its tenets with the pure and unadulterated truths of the Gospel. Pride and vanity would not suffer them to confess their errors, or to acknowledge the authority of Revelation; yet were they constrained to borrow from it something which might make the poverty of their own resources less conspicuous. Determined, however, to cast odium upon the religion of Christ, as a *new* superstition, originating among an obscure and illiterate people, they pushed their researches, with unremitting diligence, into ancient times, for the purpose of giving to their own theories an air of antiquity, which should render them venerable in the public eye, and induce a belief of their Divine original. But, lest it should not avail to shew the antiquity of Paganism, without shewing at the same time its intrinsic superiority to the Gospel; the labours of its votaries were further employed, to represent it as comprising, under mystical representations of exquisite ingenuity, all the truths of Christianity which were worthy of acceptance. The writings of the Platonists, in this and the two succeeding centuries, abound with

intimations, however dark and obscure, to this effect: consisting not so much of direct attacks upon the truth of the Gospel, as of artful endeavours to disguise the absurdities of their own systems, by such refinements as might assimilate them (in appearance at least) to the sacred doctrines of Revelation.

But the efforts of the learned advocates of Heathenism were not confined to these abstruse and recondite speculations; nor were their exertions always so much on the defensive. Hierocles laboured with great assiduity to give a fresh sanction to the pretensions of the impostor Apollonius; and, by comparing him with our Blessed Saviour, to magnify the former at the expense of the latter. He met indeed with ample chastisement, for this and other attacks upon the Faith, from the pen of Eusebius: but it is not to be supposed that works of such a nature, adapted to the taste and capacity of the superficial and the corrupt, would be wholly without mischief. Adversaries, therefore, were not wanting, of every description, even in this prosperous era of the Church, both to encourage the vanity of learned unbelievers, and to mislead the ignorance and simplicity of the vulgar.

Thus was the great Enemy of our Salvation

still at work, preparing the way (during the reign of Constantine and his immediate successors) for that indefatigable advocate in his cause, the Apostate Emperor Julian; than whom we read of none who ever laboured more zealously in the service of Infidelity, or whose character more amply merits the consideration of such as are desirous of "knowing "the depths of Satan[b]."

Julian had the early advantage of a Christian education; but, before his principles were well-formed, he fell into the hands of the most dangerous Sophists, men bigoted to the reveries of Paganism, subtle, imposing, and unwearied in their efforts to crush the Gospel, and to bring back the reign of Gentile Philosophy. Under the guidance of such men, a youthful mind, so vain, and so susceptible of flattery and falsehood, as that of Julian, could hardly escape contamination. But before he fell into these hands, and even whilst he was under the tuition of Christian instructors, he is said to have discovered a peculiar antipathy to the Gospel, and a partiality to Heathenism, which predisposed him to listen with eagerness to those who were most ready to lead him astray. His preju-

[b] Rev. ii. 24.

dices in this respect were also heightened by personal resentment towards his Imperial relations; from whom, though professing Christianity, it must be acknowledged that he had experienced the most unnatural treatment.

These considerations, however, afford but a slender apology for one, whose talents have been extolled by his admirers, as far above the common standard of excellence. And even though we should estimate him (more justly perhaps) as a man of brilliant, rather than of solid parts, still it would not be easy to find an excuse for so miserable a perversion of them, as his apostasy from the Gospel exhibits. If, however, we are to doubt the sincerity of Julian's belief in Paganism, his understanding is only vindicated at the expense of his moral character; nay, he stands convicted as doubly a hypocrite, believing neither in Heathenism nor Christianity, yet occasionally professing both, maintaining with the greatest pertinacity opinions which he secretly despised, and persecuting one religion, only because it was irreconcilable with another, which he held in equal contempt.

But of Julian's attachment to Heathen Idolatry, and his belief in the grossest of its absurdities, his own admirers will hardly suffer us to doubt. They represent him as

most scrupulously observant of its superstitions: and it is the boast of his great panegyrist, Libanius, that, far from admitting Polytheism only in a refined and mystical sense, he adopted it in its vulgar acceptation, with as much credulity as the most illiterate of his subjects.

If this representation of him be true, we cannot but consider Julian as thoroughly devoted to that Religion of Satan; and, in order to account for such strange infatuation in one who in his infant years had been trained to the Christian Faith, we must either suppose him to have been deceived, at an early period of life, by the malicious artifices of those who laboured to initiate him into its abominable mysteries; or that, being afterwards "given up to a reprobate mind," the Evil Spirit was permitted to work upon him by diabolical illusions, and to plunge him still further into the depths of perdition. Nor, perhaps, will they who duly consider some very strange and mysterious transactions recorded of Julian and his associates, be disinclined to adopt this latter opinion.

But as it is repugnant to all our knowledge of the divine attributes, to suppose that God ever hardens the hearts of those, who have not themselves already hardened them by

wilful impiety and opposition to the truth; so do we find in Julian a striking instance of a man, determined, almost, from the beginning, to involve himself in the sin of Apostasy. What excuse, indeed, can be alleged for such a man; one who was accustomed to weigh, to examine, and accurately to judge, in all other matters; and who was only blind, wilfully blind, in the momentous concern of Salvation? He saw, he could not but see, the excellence of Christianity. He had every opportunity presented to him of examining its proofs, and appreciating its value. He had been accustomed to read the Holy Scriptures, to hear them explained, and to observe with great exactitude the most solemn ordinances of the Church. Nay, even after his release from the restraints of tuition, he went so far as to profess some degree of reverence and zeal for the Gospel.

But this dissimulation he only deemed it expedient to practise, so long as he was in some degree dependent upon others. No sooner was he raised to a joint share of the imperial dignity, than he threw off the mask, and began to discover evident symptoms of that disposition, which, upon his succeeding to the undivided sovereignty of the Empire, displayed itself without reserve.

His first object was, to rescue the Gentile Religion from that just contempt into which it hath fallen. For this purpose, he strove to reform its scandalous enormities; and to new-model it, so as to give it a nearer resemblance to the system of Christian purity. In so doing, he was driven to the necessity of implicitly acknowledging the superiority of the Gospel, and the virtues of its professors; of which there cannot be a more striking proof, than his letter to the Chief-Priest of Galatia, respecting the duties of the Sacerdotal Order, and the general conduct becoming the votaries of Heathenism.

His next object was, by ridicule, to make Christianity appear contemptible. For this purpose, he availed himself of his early knowledge of the Sacred Writings, and of his extraordinary talent for sarcasm and irony, to throw out bitter insinuations against the Galileans, (such was his wonted appellation of Christian Believers,) and against the sacred Founder of their Religion. Their doctrines and their ordinances were made subjects of derision; their principles of meekness and submission were tauntingly put to the severest trials; their very virtues were made the occasion of ridicule and insult; and the pure precepts of the Gospel were perverted and

misapplied, for the purpose of representing its disciples as men of despicable character, and holding tenets of the most pernicious description.

It is peculiar, however, to Julian, among those Emperors who sought the destruction of Christianity, that he did not resort to open and direct persecution. But this forbearance he is said to have shewn, from envying Christians the honour of martyrdom: and he himself has taken away the merit of it, by avowing that he declined such a mode of extirpating the Gospel, merely from a conviction of its insufficiency to the end proposed; which, he conceived, might more effectually be obtained, by a semblance of clemency, and by a more guarded and plausible demeanour. This he declares in several of his writings. Instead, therefore, of extolling his liberality and moderation, (as the Sophists of his own, and Infidels of modern times, are wont to do,) we may rather consider him as still more "a "child of Hell," than some of those who openly aimed at its destruction; inasmuch as cruelty, concealed under the mask of moderation, is a surer indication of a malignant heart, than hasty transports of impetuous passion. More especially are we led to this inference respecting Julian, when we find,

that while he disclaimed any particular acts of persecution as sanctioned by his authority, he nevertheless *connived* at them, in most instances; and even *encouraged* them, whenever the scene of action was so remote, as to lessen the suspicion of his being the instigator.

But in no instance were his malicious designs against the Gospel more strikingly displayed, than in his insidious professions of kindness towards the *Jews*, for the purpose of inciting them to an attempt, which (if successful) must, he well knew, prove fatal to the cause of Christianity. To restore the Jewish temple and worship, (the destruction of which had been expressly foretold in the Sacred Writings, and had exactly come to pass,) would not only attach the Jews to his interests, but would demonstrate the falsehood of the Christian prophecies. On this point, therefore, he laboured with more than usual assiduity; hoping, no doubt, if it were effected, to reduce both Jews and Christians to an entire dependence upon his will; or, perhaps, to sacrifice them both at the shrine of Paganism; inasmuch as the very same event which should falsify the New Testament, could not fail of destroying the credit of the Old. The preternatural events by which this his fa-

vourite project was frustrated, are so well known as to render a detail of them superfluous. Although they have been boldly called in question by Infidel Writers, we are well warranted in asserting them to be among the best authenticated facts in ancient history, since they are circumstantially recorded by writers of that age, and even by such as were most prejudiced in the Emperor's favour.

It was another project of Julian, to banish all *Learning* from among Christians; and to reduce them to a state of ignorance and barbarism, by depriving them even of the common advantages of education. This was a deep-laid scheme; and, had it been carried into execution, could hardly have failed of accomplishing the end proposed. Julian laboured, therefore, indefatigably, to effect this part of his design. The whole Empire was converted, as it were, into a College of Infidelity; and scarcely a department in the State was unoccupied by Sophists, on whom he depended for the completion of this grand scheme. But "the foolishness of God" (as said St. Paul) "is wiser than men; and the "weakness of God is stronger than men[x]:" and never was this more remarkably proved,

[x] 1 Cor. i. 25.

than in the preeminence which the Gospel still maintained over its insidious opponents.

In addition to these various artifices, Julian strove, with extraordinary subtlety, to ensnare Christians into acts of Heathen worship, and to implicate them unawares in the performance of services repugnant to their principles. The instances of this kind which are on record, together with the distress and anguish of some deluded victims of his contrivance, the firmness of others in refusing compliance with his injunctions, and the vindictive measures of the Emperor, whenever he was disappointed in these projects, furnish a very interesting scene of conflict, between Cunning, Oppression, and Malice, on the one hand, and Simplicity, Integrity, and Inflexibility on the other.

But, to crown the whole, Julian was ambitious to distinguish himself as a *Writer* against Christianity. Of his labours in this field we find no other specimens, than those which are preserved in the refutation of his work by St. Cyril. From them we perceive, that, like his predecessors in the same cause, he assails Christianity as an *innovation* upon the ancient religion of the State, and a system of plagiarism from the Jewish and Heathen Religions. He reviles the Mosaic history,

as making God the Author of Evil; and as degrading the Deity, by his supposed interposition in human affairs. He ridicules the Jewish Law; and boastingly sets up the writings of Heathen Philosophers as infinitely superior to the Holy Scriptures. He revives the exploded calumnies of the first and second centuries against our Lord and his Apostles, however gross and absurd, even whilst he admits the miracles they had wrought: and he endeavours to fix upon Christianity the charge of inconsistency and falsehood, in acknowledging the authority of the Jewish Scriptures, and yet abrogating the Jewish Law. To these frivolous objections his learned antagonist replies, so as clearly to convict the Imperial Sophist, either of utter ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation, of the Christian system.

Nevertheless, with all the odious and detestable qualities which mark the character of Julian, he obtained, almost throughout the world, the reputation, not only of splendid talents, but even of exalted virtues. Strange indeed is the inconsistency, and the contrast betwixt vice and virtue, which his character exhibits. With a mind richly endowed by nature, and stored with noble sentiments, which he had imbibed chiefly from

his Christian education, yet was the main portion of his life devoted to vilifying and opposing that Religion, to which he was so much indebted. Great as a Statesman, great as a Warrior, great as a Scholar, great as a Moralist and Philosopher, (if any real greatness may be attributed to these characters, when destitute of "the wisdom that is from "above,") Julian was only mean and contemptible, when he applied his talents to the subject of *Religion*. Here he sometimes appeared to sink below the common standard of discernment and ability: acting with ridiculous extravagance and puerility, while he affected the consequence of a man born to dictate to the Universe. His whole character affords an awful lesson of the extent of infatuation to which the human mind is capable of being driven, after a wilful abandonment of the means of Grace, and a determined opposition to Divine Truth. No period of ancient history, perhaps, affords one that is more so. Modern times have, indeed, produced one Royal Personage, who, in many points, strikingly resembled Julian, and concerning whom we shall have more to notice hereafter. But, considering the shortness of Julian's reign, and the various struggles of warfare by which that short reign was

embarrassed, wonderful were the efforts which he made, to attain his grand object, the overthrow of Christianity. So deeply was the conspiracy laid between him and his philosophical myrmidons for this purpose, that nothing but the interposition of Providence, in his premature and violent death, appears to have prevented its execution. Such too was the increasing boldness of Paganism, and the distress of Christians, towards the latter end of his reign, that the great leaders of the Church looked forward to nothing less than finishing their earthly career with Martyrdom, as their predecessors of old had done before the days of Constantine.

But it having pleased God, by the death of Julian, to give a fatal blow to the hopes of Paganism, a new aspect of affairs was presented. Under the succeeding Emperors, from Julian to Theodosius, Christianity again experienced the protection of the Civil Power. The policy, however, of these Emperors led them, for the most part, not only to tolerate Paganism, but to extend towards its adherents such a degree of patronage and favour, as served still to give considerable encouragement to the practice of Heathen superstitions. Hence there prevailed, until the reign of Theodosius, a mixture of Heathenism and

Christianity, such as the affected liberality of certain modern historians may be inclined to contemplate with complacency, but such as the lover of Truth will regard as calculated to promote Scepticism and Irreligion, rather than the real welfare of mankind. Unhappily also, the Church itself about this time began to be so harassed and distracted by heretical and schismatical innovations, that its members were more occupied in disputing with each other, than in defending the common cause against impiety and superstition. Nevertheless, the Gospel made extraordinary progress in distant and barbarous countries. It was preached successfully in India, Iberia, and Thrace. It extended to the most remote parts of the three Continents; and it increased abundantly among those Northern tribes, who, not long afterwards, subjugated the Western Empire.

A severe persecution of Christianity prevailed, however, in Persia, instigated by the idolatrous Magi, whose ancient and deeply-rooted worship of the Sun and of the Element of Fire did not easily yield to the Gospel-Truth. The Jews also still continued to distinguish themselves as its bitter enemies; not only in their vain attempt to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, but also by

inciting, especially in the Eastern Empire, a spirit of hostility against the disciples of Christ.

But from the time that Theodosius ascended the throne, Christianity received more effectual support; and Paganism fell, to rise no more. This distinguished Prince and Legislator so amply provided for the security and welfare of the Church, that it became impracticable any longer to uphold the cause of Heathenism, "whose Gods being no Gods, "but the work of men's hands, wood and "stone[y]," were totally unable to rescue their votaries from disgrace. Whilst Christianity had, even under the severest restraints and persecutions, not only subsisted, but increased and flourished; Paganism, from the instant it was deprived of worldly support, sunk into contempt and oblivion. Thus was fulfilled that prophecy of Jeremiah, "The Gods that "have not made the heavens and the earth, "even they shall perish from the earth[z]:" and also that memorable denunciation by the Prophet Isaiah, "the Idols he shall utterly "abolish, and they shall go into the holes of "the rocks, and into the caves of the earth;" and "in that day a man shall cast his idols

[y] Isa. xxxvi. 19. [z] Jer. x. 11.

" of silver, and his idols of gold, which they " made, each one for himself to worship, to " the moles and to the bats[a]." Then likewise were accomplished the awful predictions in the Apocalypse, relative to the downfall of Heathen Rome[b].

It is wonderful, however, to observe the continued exertions of Pagans, to prevent the entire overthrow of their cause. A considerable party in the Roman Senate persisted in upholding Paganism, in opposition to the Imperial authority. A formal deputation was sent to Valentinian, accompanied by the renowned orator Symmachus, to plead its cause in the Emperor's presence. The eloquent advocate was, however, twice completely vanquished by Ambrose, the venerable champion of the Christian faith. Similar attempts were afterwards made, to gain the favour of Theodosius; but they ended in fresh disgrace and defeat. Baffled, therefore, in these undertakings, nothing remained, but to endeavour to make some compromise with the ruling powers, for the *toleration* of Paganism. With this view, every opportunity was seized to inculcate *moderation*, and to extol the godlike qualities of forbearance and kindness

[a] Isa. ii. 18, 19, 20. [b] Rev. vi. 12, &c.

towards those who dissented from the established Religion. Such arguments from men, who, whenever they had the power, failed not to persecute the Church with the utmost rancour and malignity, might well be thought shameless and ridiculous. But the policy was obvious. The object of these humbled apologists, was to create a general *indifference* to religious truth, and to avert the storm which they apprehended to be falling upon them; well aware that Heathenism would not stand the fiery ordeal which Christianity had endured; nor flourish, as *that* had done, under circumstances of discouragement and contempt.

Still, however, the Writers in defence of the Gentile Theology, eagerly strove to work upon the public mind, and to excite popular prejudices against the Christian Religion. They availed themselves of the evident decline of the Roman Empire, to represent its progress as offensive to the Deities who presided over human affairs; attributing to this cause the increasing ravages of the Barbarians. To expose the futility of such opinions, and to vindicate Divine Providence against these calumnies, St. Augustin wrote his celebrated treatise, "Of the City of God," Orosius and Salvian successfully laboured in the same

cause. These, and other Writers of the fifth century, were more than equal to the task of repelling the weak assaults both of Heathen and Jewish Writers; and easily brought into disrepute the labours of those who were still desirous of substituting the reveries of the Platonic School for the substantial and eternal truths of the Gospel of Christ.

Similar exertions, on both sides, characterize the *next* century; in the beginning of which, however, the Emperor Justinian so effectually strengthened the establishment of Christianity, and precluded the revival of Heathenism, that no considerable attempts were made to set up the gods of the earth against the God of heaven. This Emperor's reign was distinguished by multitudes of converts from among both Heathens and Jews; and also by the introduction of the Christian Æra, or computation of time from our Lord's Nativity; which was first proposed and adopted under the auspices of this truly Christian Prince.

It is true, that many writers still continued their open attacks upon the Gospel, as well as their endeavours to undermine it by false Philosophy. More art, however, became necessary, in order to conceal the absurdities of their systems. The subtleties

of the Eclectics of the second century were accordingly revived, in the vain hope that the fanciful refinements of human ingenuity might bear a comparison with the doctrine of Christ. But these refinements, though they still continued to amuse the vain, the indolent, or the corrupt, gradually declined in estimation; not only from the discouragement of the ruling powers, but also from the frequent and impressive animadversions of Christian Writers: so that before the end of this century the Platonic philosophy became almost extinct, or departed to seek admirers in less enlightened countries.

Yet even in this auspicious period, the Church of God flourished not without considerable molestation. The barbarous nations, who invaded both the Eastern and Western empires, were, in many instances, grievous enemies to the Christian Faith. In particular, a most dreadful persecution prevailed in Persia, under Chosroes, its cruel and impious Monarch; whose blasphemous menaces against the God of Christians, and sanguinary efforts to carry them into execution, betray strong indications of diabolical rage and phrensy. But great was the progress of the Gospel in every quarter of the globe; many distant nations readily embraced it: amongst

whom let us gratefully record the inhabitants of our own Island.

Having thus brought down our inquiries to a memorable period of the Christian Church, let us pause a moment, to take a retrospective view of the many proofs of Divine superintendence displayed in its triumph over the obstacles which it had to encounter.

The first efforts of Heathenism against Christianity were characterized by a sanguinary and vindictive spirit. For three centuries it raged with open violence; and but seldom abated any thing of its cruelty. In the three succeeding centuries it assumed a different aspect; though through the thin veil of dissimulation might easily be discerned the features of malignant hatred. After Constantine's advancement to the Imperial throne, little hopes were to be derived from direct and avowed hostility; except during the short reign of Julian, when the malevolent disposition of Paganism was again displayed in its genuine colours. Thenceforward, all hopes of reviving its mysteries of iniquity were blasted. Nothing remained, therefore, but to aim at counteracting by artifice and delusion the progress of the Gospel; and gradually to inspire men with an indifference for its doctrines, or with a contempt of its authority.

For this purpose, Paganism was to be clothed in a more attractive garb: and Philosophers were employed in dressing up this idol of their devotion, so as to dazzle the eyes and win the admiration of the vulgar.

Thus did Satan, who, before the Christian æra, possessed almost an undivided and absolute sway over the Gentile world, now seek to blind mankind to the vanity and impiety of his former systems. From the Fall of Adam to the Birth of Christ, it had been his unceasing effort to persuade men to rely upon other means of Salvation than those which God had appointed. All the Heathen Idolatry may be considered as one delusive scheme suggested by this Evil Spirit, in direct opposition to the revealed Will of God, originating in an absolute rejection of that Will, and an open departure from Him, who alone is "mighty to save[c]." As long as it was possible to maintain that system by violence or imposture, it was persevered in by the agents of Apostasy. But when, through the manifest interposition of Providence in the introduction and establishment of the Christian Religion, it became impracticable to uphold Paganism any longer, then was the

[c] Isa. lxiii. 1.

plan of delusion changed; a reluctant homage was paid to the Saviour of mankind, even in the very means which were used to render the Gospel of none effect. Such were the attempts we have already noticed, to assimilate Pagan Philosophy with Christian Truth, and to impose it upon the world as of equal value and importance.

Still, in all these attempts, no effectual provision was made (none, indeed, *could* be made) for man's Redemption from sin and misery. The Prince of darkness had promised, of old, to his deluded votaries, a sufficient Atonement for sin: but his boasted pretensions had entirely failed, and had shewn him to be the Father of Lies. The Pagan *Sacrifices* were proved to be inefficient. Their *Oracles* were struck dumb. Their *Gods* were destroyed. Where, then, was the hope of Salvation? Where was the "Anchor of the Soul," whereupon the sinner might rest his hope? It was gone; and Paganism had nothing to offer in its stead. "Satan had fallen, like lightning from hea-"ven;" and those who trusted in him were utterly confounded.

The next step therefore to be pursued, in order to blind man to his interests and lead him to destruction, was to represent *human*

Reason as alone competent to guide him into all truth, and his own *natural Virtue* as sufficient to ensure him perfect happiness. Hence, the refinements of Sophists, for the purpose of puffing up the mind of man, and making him too proud to accept the aid of Heaven. Read the vain reveries of ancient Philosophers, of whatever Sect, and see whether any thing can be found in them, to administer comfort to the mind, but the vain and presumptuous notion of man's perfection. This, indeed, is at the root of every system, ancient or modern, which sets aside Divine Revelation. For there are but two ways, by which men can hope for the attainment of happiness:—one is, by some means of atoning for their sins, and helping their infirmities;—the other, by a reliance on their own strength and perfectibility. Every system of *Superstition* aims at the former, without any solid foundation for its support: every scheme of *Irreligion* trusts to the latter, in direct contradiction to Reason and Experience.

But it is enough, for the present, to have hinted at these things; which will come more regularly under discussion in the further course of our inquiries. Having now traced the rise, progress, and downfall of Pa-

ganism, the next grand effort of Antichrist which demands our attention is the work of the Impostor Mahomet; in the review of which important subject, we shall discern fresh proofs of the continual struggle betwixt Christ and Belial, as well as of the deplorable perverseness of man, and his proneness to rush upon his own destruction. But this must be reserved for another opportunity.

SERMON VI.

REVELATION ix. 11.

And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

THE best Commentators are generally agreed in applying this passage of Scripture to the Impostor Mahomet, (who is here identified, as it were, with the Evil Spirit,) and in expounding the greater part of the chapter as descriptive of the irruptions of the Saracens and Turks, under him and his successors. Scarcely was the Roman Empire delivered from Pagan Superstition, and beginning to enjoy the blessings of the Gospel, when this disturber of the peace of mankind issued forth, to spread corruption, apostasy, and misery. What Jewish and Pagan Infidelity, whether separately or jointly, had been unable to accomplish, the Arabian Deceiver sought to effect, by this fresh attempt to seduce mankind from their faith in the ge-

nuine Revelation of God's Will, and to plunge them again into the depths of error and delusion.

It would be easy to point out the striking application of many passages in this chapter of the Apocalypse, to the circumstances attending the career of this scourge of the human race. But the professed object of the present inquiry necessarily confines our attention to a general view of the spirit and tendency of that gigantic system of imposture which he introduced; that we may not be persuaded (as too many have been) to regard it in any other light than as dictated by the Spirit of Falsehood, and directed (like all other works of the same Spirit) to the purposes of malignity and mischief.

A more stupendous event is not, perhaps, recorded in the annals of mankind, than the rise, progress, and success of the Mahometan Superstition. That an individual, without learning, rank, or consequence in society, should conceive and execute the design of forcing it upon mankind, seems, at first sight, so strange and marvellous, as to carry with it a presumptive proof of something more than human agency; and might even tempt a superficial observer to regard it as scarcely

less miraculous than the propagation of Christianity itself. But an attentive consideration of the peculiar character of this religion, and of the circumstances under which it was devised and carried on, will prove it to stand upon a totally different foundation from that on which the Gospel is established.

To shew this, it will be necessary to consider, in the first place, the state of the world, both political and religious, at the time of its introduction; secondly, the subtle policy of Mahomet, in adapting his system and his conduct to the tempers and prejudices of those with whom he was concerned; and, lastly, those peculiar features in the system itself, which denote its falsehood and impiety, and justly characterize its author as preeminently the Destroyer of mankind. When these points have been sufficiently explained, we shall be at no loss to account for either its origin or its success.

1. Nothing could be more favourable to the views of an ambitious mind, than the political state of the world at the time of Mahomet's appearance. The Western Empire was greatly weakened by the irruptions of the Goths; the Eastern, by those of the Huns and Persians. An opportunity was thus offered to the Arabs, a spirited and

daring people, to commit depredations, especially in the Oriental countries, with little danger of repulse. Of this state of affairs so subtle and enterprising a genius as that of Mahomet did not fail to take advantage. He saw, that, once in possession of Arabia, he might confidently aspire to an extensive and solid dominion. In the circumstances of either Empire there was every thing to encourage an ardent mind; disunion and turbulence, with their usual concomitants, weakness and degeneracy, being every where conspicuous. Supposing, therefore, the thoughts of Mahomet to have been, at first, chiefly intent upon objects of temporal ambition, nothing was wanting to stimulate him to his attempts.

If, on the other hand, we conceive him to have been, from the beginning, principally desirous of distinguishing himself as the Founder of a new Religion, and only to have turned his thoughts to conquest and empire, as means of attaining that end; we shall find, that the religious, no less than the political, state of the world was highly favourable to his design.

The Christian Church had, for a considerable length of time, been miserably distracted by heresies and divisions. Succes-

sive leaders continually arose, disseminating new opinions destructive both of doctrine and discipline. Among the external causes operating in favour of Mahomet's Antichristian scheme, we cannot but regard this as one of considerable influence; nor can we doubt, that, among the labours of the Evil Spirit to despoil mankind of the inestimable gift of the Gospel, it would ever be a favourite project, to divide the Church against the Church, and thus to render it the instrument of its own destruction. Scarcely a Church, perhaps, was at that time uninfected with pernicious errors. Even in those which the Apostles had planted and watered, evident tokens began to appear of the fulfilment of the predictions in the Apocalypse[c], relative to the punishment of their lukewarmness or their corruption of the Faith. None can read those awful threatenings of the removal of the light of the Gospel from the seven Churches of Asia, and compare the history of those Churches with the Apostle's prophetical description of them, without perceiving, that in their overthrow the execution of the Divine judgments was signally displayed. "The Lord," saith Solomon, "hath made all "things for himself, yea, even the *wicked* for

[c] Rev. ch. ii. and iii.

"the day of evil[d]." Thus he suffered Mahomet to be the instrument of his wrath, and to subvert those Churches which had once been the glory of the Christian world, but which had now shamefully departed from the true Faith, and were not to be reclaimed by the Divine forbearance.

With respect to Arabia, where the Impostor was to commence his career, it presented but a hopeless prospect to the Preacher of Truth, though by no means a discouraging one to a crafty and unprincipled Impostor. The Arabs in general still retained their primitive Idolatry, the worship of the heavenly bodies, and of other imaginary Deities, supposed to be subordinate and assistant to the Supreme Being. Some tribes had likewise adopted the Magian Superstition, from their Persian neighbours. The Jewish Religion, however, was well known among them; more especially after the destruction of Jerusalem, when many Jews were driven from Palestine to seek refuge in Arabia. Christianity also had made an early and considerable progress in this country, in consequence of the dreadful persecutions which it had suffered in the Roman Empire. Here, however, Heresy was

[d] Prov. xvi. 4.

always found to flourish as in a congenial soil; and exhibited itself under every variety of error. Hence the Arabs were, in point of credulity and ignorance, the fittest, perhaps, for an Impostor's purpose, of any people upon earth. Their national character also rendered them still more suitable instruments in a bold and promising enterprise. According to the memorable prophecy concerning Ishmael and his posterity, "he "will be a wild man, his hand will be against "every man, and every man's hand against "him[e]," these his descendants ever manifested a readiness to follow any lawless adventurer, who would lead them on to schemes of usurpation and rapine. Ardent and impetuous, of strong passions and luxuriant imaginations, whatever laid hold on their ambitious or voluptuous propensities, was almost sure to win their affections.

2. Such being the state of the world when Mahomet appeared, let us next see how well he adapted his measures to these circumstances, and how studiously his system was framed to meet the wishes of all whom he sought to delude.

The great mass of his countrymen were

[e] Gen xvi. 12.

Heathens, equally bigoted as those of ancient Greece and Rome to their idolatrous superstitions: and, though he had before his eyes a recent instance of the triumph of Christianity over Paganism throughout the Roman Empire, he was well aware that he had not at his command the same *means* which Christianity had so successfully employed. It was expedient, therefore, that he should compass his end by some compromise with the prejudices of his *Heathen* countrymen; and at the same time should avoid giving offence to the followers of the Gospel, whose co-operation, or connivance, at least, seemed necessary to his success. He had also the *Jews*, a very different description of people, to deal with; a people hitherto the most obstinate and impersuasible, and almost equally hostile to Pagans and to Christians. These abounded in Arabia; and unless their pejudices were consulted, the Impostor might reasonably dread their opposition to his views. As to *Christians*, he had not only to shake, in the first instance, their belief in the Gospel as the final Revelation of God's will to mankind, but to adapt, as far as possible, his own system to the many discordant opinions prevalent among Heretics of various denominations. To these

seemingly irreconcilable opponents his new Religion was to be addressed.

Mahomet, aware of these difficulties, set out with declaring that he came not to promulgate a *new* Religion, but to revive an *old* one; to confirm and reestablish the true and genuine Doctrine of the Patriarchs, of Moses, and of Christ, purified from the various corruptions which it had undergone. He acknowledged the divine authority of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but declared them to have been so vitiated by Jews and Christians as to have become insufficient for their intended purpose. He relied, therefore, chiefly upon an assumed *Tradition*, in conjunction with his own pretended Revelations; and affirmed that his doctrines and precepts were derived from those which Abraham had taught to Ishmael, and which had been received by the Arabs themselves, previous to their lapse into Idolatry. By this convenient pretext he reserved to himself the liberty of adding to the Holy Scriptures or of taking from them as best suited his purpose: and, whenever he found that neither the written nor the traditional Law was adapted to his particular views, it was easy to have recourse to fresh Revelations, according to the exigency of the case. Moses

and Jesus, as well as the Patriarchs, he would allow, were true Prophets, and inspired of God: but it remained for *him* to perfect what they had left incomplete, to correct what in them had been erroneous, and to preclude the necessity of any further Revelation, by declaring whatever was requisite to be believed or done, in order to obtain the Divine acceptance.

The policy of Mahomet, in the conception and execution of this bold design, is worthy of particular observation.

By pretending to revive the ancient Patriarchal Religion, a plausible excuse was afforded for retaining many *Pagan* usages of great antiquity, and gaining favour with the Arabs, who were thus confirmed in their persuasion that the rites to which they were accustomed had constituted an essential part of the true primitive worship, and were originally of Divine institution. This was highly flattering to their prejudices, and prepared them more readily to abandon, at the Prophet's injunction, the gross Polytheism to which they had hitherto been addicted.

In like manner, the Impostor flattered the *Jews*, by adopting as much of their Ritual as it was possible for him to introduce, with-

out doing violence to the prejudices of others whom he was also desirous of gaining over to his views. This similarity between the Jewish and Mahometan ceremonials has been illustrated by able writers, in so full and convincing a manner, as to leave not a doubt that the pretended Prophet and Apostle was, in this instance, a consummate and artful plagiarist. Nor, in thus borrowing freely from Jewish and Heathen rituals, was he in any great danger of giving offence to either by the heterogeneous mixture that was produced. For, as, on the one hand, many Pagan rites were originally borrowed from the Jewish ceremonial law; so, on the other, since the dispersion of the Jews, many superstitious customs adopted from other nations had been engrafted upon the Mosaic Institute; and Rabbinical conceits were become scarcely less fantastical than Heathen pageantry.

Thus Mahomet found means to render his religion acceptable to Jews and Heathens; and to this circumstance may be ascribed much of his success with these two different descriptions of proselytes, who resembled each other in this respect, that both were attached to frivolous ceremonies and forms,

without regard to the genuine spirit of Religion.

With *Christians*, Mahomet had need of more subtlety and address. To extirpate Idolatry from among their fellow-countrymen, was, indeed, a work, in which every Christian might well be supposed ready to co-operate; and as Mahomet recognised the Divine authority both of Moses and of Jesus, Christians, as well as Jews, might be willing to give him a hearing. But it was not to their ardour in the cause of *Truth*, against Superstition and falsehood, that he could safely trust for a favourable reception of his doctrine. He saw the dispositions of too many among them to create disunion, and to disseminate tenets the most irreconcilable with Scripture, as well as with each other. With the numerous heresies which then infested the Church, he appears (if we may judge from the use which he has made of them in the Koran) to have been exceedingly conversant. Hence the Code of Mahometanism not only exhibits a strange compound of Heathen and Jewish errors, but comprises almost every *heterodox* opinion respecting the Christian Faith, which is to be met with among ancient Heretics. But (as has been

shewn by a masterly writer of our own times) the *Arian* heresy stands forth as its most prominent feature[f]. His adoption of *this* heresy (which seems, in some respects, to militate against his own pretended superiority to Christ) affords a striking proof of his eagerness to make proselytes of a party at that time exceedingly numerous and powerful. In this, indeed, as well as in other parts of his system, we see a constant endeavour to render his doctrine palatable to men of *every* description, whose minds were already alienated from the truth; men, ready and willing to admit error in any, even its grossest form, if it did but favour their own particular conceits.

To these errors he added some which may be considered, perhaps, as entirely his own; and well knowing that where the understanding refuses to admit "sound doctrine," it is seldom that the heart is not corrupted, he framed many of his tenets so as to gratify those vicious propensities by which all are but too easily swayed, and which are found to be more especially prevalent among the voluptuous inhabitants of the East.

To the ingenuity, then, as well as the audacity of Mahomet, profiting by the pecu-

[f] Whittaker's Origin of Arianism.

liar circumstances of the age in which he lived, much of his success is to be attributed. It has indeed been asserted, that he was rude and illiterate; and his followers are proud of representing him as an uneducated man, that his pretensions to Divine inspirations may appear the more conspicuous. But to this it has been well replied, that if he were ignorant of *letters*, he was certainly not ignorant of *mankind*, whom he seems to have studied with more than common diligence and sagacity. It is also evident that he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with the religious features of the several descriptions of men with whom he had to treat, and knew how to avail himself of their respective peculiarities. And although the astonishing ignorance which he sometimes betrays of the most remarkable facts and doctrines of Holy Writ, might almost lead us to suppose that he had little knowledge of their contents, except through the distorted misrepresentations of others; yet when we recollect the declarations of most of his biographers, that he was assisted in framing the Koran by a Persian Jew and a renegado Christian; we are enabled to account for that strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of truth and falsehood, of credulity and unbelief, which

might be expected to flow from such polluted sources.

Thus prepared, Mahomet came forth to execute the vast project which he had formed. But the number of his followers during the first thirteen years of his preaching being but few, though of resolute and daring characters, he determined to wait no longer the tedious issue of exhortation and persuasion; and boldly declared himself commissioned by the Most High, to propagate his Religion by force of arms. To the power of working *Miracles* he made no direct pretensions. He affirmed that God withheld from him this power, because it had already proved ineffectual to bring men to the truth; and that he was ordained to use the sword, as of superior efficacy. His *prudence*, at least, must be acknowledged, in thus avoiding the danger of asserting claims which he was conscious of being unable to fulfil. The Sword and the Koran, both the alleged instruments of Divine authority, were much easier weapons of controversy and readier means of conversion, in the hands of an Impostor, than an appeal to Miracles. They were within the compass of human ability to manage, and left no room for deliberation on the part of those to whom they were presented.

By this union of fraud and violence, Mahomet succeeded in establishing his Religion, and laying the foundation of that gigantic empire which, in the course of eighty years, extended farther than the Roman Empire had done in eight hundred years; comprising the Grecian, Persian, Turkish, and Mogul states, with many others of inferior importance.

3. Let us now proceed to the proposed examination of the System itself; which we shall find to be abundant in falsehood and impiety, and worthy of *him* only, whose object is the delusion and destruction of mankind.

The religion of Mahomet has this striking peculiarity, that it bears witness to the truth while it propagates a lie. Though founded itself on imposture, it does not charge with imposture either Judaism or Christianity; but recognises both as true. It admits the Miracles both of the Old and New Testament. It affects to reverence the authority of Moses and of Christ: but brings against their disciples the improbable charge of falsifying those Scriptures, which in common with them it professes to revere. Hence some have considered this heterogeneous compound rather as a system of Heresy, than of Infidelity;

because it admits, in general terms, the pretensions of the Gospel, though it despoils it of its most important truths, by assuming a mutilation or interpolation of the Scriptures; the very pretext which Heresy usually adopts, to favour its own purposes. Thus we may easily account for the complacency with which modern Deists and Socinians appear to regard the Koran. They admire it, because it sets aside those distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, the Divinity of Christ and the Sacrifice upon the Cross; and prepares the way for what the former are pleased to dignify with the title of Natural Religion, and the latter with that of Rational Christianity.

But some writers, not apparently of this description, have taken pains to represent Mahomet rather as a well-intentioned reformer or an honest enthusiast, than as a wilful promoter of falsehood and mischief. They acknowledge that his zeal carried him into the most culpable extravagancies; but are willing to find an apology for its excess, in the opposition which was at first made to his almost laudable designs, and in the unwillingness of those whose reformation he desired to relinquish their ancient prejudices. Nay, they view him as a man desirous, not only to reclaim his countrymen from Heathen idol-

atry, but to correct the errors and abuses which had crept into Christianity itself; and they incline to excuse the violence of his proceedings, respecting the latter as well as the former, by insinuating that it was become almost too corrupt to be reformed by any other means than those which Mahomet employed.

Thus, as if the purity of his motives were unquestionable, it has been remarked that "his design of bringing the Pagan Arabs to "the knowledge of the true God, was noble, "and highly to be commended[g]:" and the author who thus writes is much offended with the learned Prideaux, who more pertinently observes that the Impostor "forced the Arabs "to exchange their idolatry for another reli-"gion altogether as bad[h]." But may we not justly ask, what there is "to be commended," even in the design itself, much less in the execution of it? Mahomet preached, it is true, belief in *one* God, to the exclusion of the numberless idols of Polytheism: but to this fundamental article of faith he made it an indispensable addition, that they should believe in *him* as the Prophet and Apostle of God. Where, then, is the difference, in

[g] Sale's Preface to the Koran, vol. I. page 51.
[h] Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, page 67.

point of religious truth and saving knowledge, between a Pagan and a Mahometan? When the Holy Scriptures declare that "there is "none other name under heaven given among "men, whereby we must be saved[i]," but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; is it to be supposed that the disciples of Mahomet are acceptable to God, merely because they renounce the worship of Jupiter and Juno, or the service of Fo, or any such senseless idolatry? As there is but one God, so is there but one Mediator, and one only mode of Salvation, hitherto revealed to us: and since Salvation is of the very essence of religion, how can it be said that Mahometanism is really more efficacious than even Paganism itself? If, however, it be contended, that to convert men from Idolatry is to prepare them for the reception of the Gospel; it is obvious to reply, that this seems to have been very far from the design of Mahomet; nor do we hitherto see any such effects produced by his system; no people being more stubborn and more hardened against Christianity than his blind and fanatical disciples.

But it is a decisive answer to any thing which can be urged on this head in behalf of

[i] Acts iv. 12.

Mahomet, that nothing could justify him in imposing his system upon mankind, but a firm conviction, not only of its *utility*, but of its *truth* and its *Divine authority*. Now, that even Mahomet himself (enthusiastic as he might be, and as he appears in some instances to have been) could believe that he had a Divine commission to publish this religion to the world, it is utterly impossible to conceive. In every part of his system, in every action of his life, we see the clearest indications of Imposture. He confesses the Divine authority both of the Old and New Testament; yet not a syllable is to be found in either of them relative to himself, except we suppose him alluded to in the admonition to "beware of false Pro-" phets[k];" or except where (as in the words of the text) he is predicted as the *Destroyer* of mankind. His pretence, that these Scriptures had been mutilated both by Jews and Christians for the purpose of discrediting his claims, is wholly unsupported even by an attempt at proof. It had manifestly no other object in view than to afford him a pretext for imposing upon the credulity of his followers, by asserting new revelations to have been made to himself, in order to supply these

[k] Matt. vii. 15.

supposed defects of Holy Writ. His promptness to allege a Divine Inspiration for every point he wished to carry, relative either to the success of his project or to his own personal interest and gratification, is a prominent feature in his character: and on the superlative excellence of the Koran, the result of these pretended communications from above, he declared himself willing to rest his title to credit, as a proof of Divine interposition exceeding all the Miracles which ever were or could be wrought.

Yet even in this boasted performance are found inconsistencies and contradictions of so glaring a nature, that its author was obliged to have recourse to the convenient doctrine of *Abrogation;* by which he represented the All-wise Being as finding it necessary to revise, and even to revoke, certain parts of this Divine work, notwithstanding a declaration in the Koran itself that if it be *contradictory* in any of its positions, it cannot be the work of God.

In this volume of perfection are advanced, for instance, the following assertions:—that both Jews and Christians are Idolaters; that the Apostles and Patriarchs were Mahometans; that the angels worshipped Adam, and that the Fallen Angels were driven from

Heaven for not doing so; that our Blessed Saviour was neither God, nor the Son of God; and that he assured Mahomet of this, in a conference with him and the Almighty; yet that he was both the Word and the Spirit of God:—not to mention numberless absurdities concerning the Creation, the Deluge, the End of the World, the Resurrection, and the Day of Judgment, too gross to be received by any but the most debased understandings.

It is also intimated, in this extraordinary production, that all men were originally of one and the same Religion, but that God purposely caused and ordained them to be of different religions, by sending among them different Prophets and Apostles. Now, this is to make God the direct Author of confusion, nay, of falsehood. For, all diversities of Religion are indications of error; and, though permitted to prevail, for the trial of men's faith, or for the punishment of those who "will not come to God that they "may have life[1]," are evidently the work of him whose employment it is to frustrate our salvation. What doctrine, then, can be more characteristic of the Evil Spirit than this, which sanctifies error and disunion as the work of God?

[1] John v. 40.

Again; the points most insisted upon throughout the Koran are similar to those which the Apostle denominates "carnal ordinances[m]" and "weak and beggarly elements[n]; ceremonials of no intrinsic value, and such as even under the Mosaic Law were no otherwise efficacious than as implying faith in the better things of the Gospel. Nay, many of the ceremonies of Mahometanism were borrowed (as has already been observed) from heathen rituals; and were not only burdensome or frivolous, but absolutely profane and degrading to the Majesty of God.

But while it thus abounds with burdens unnecessary as well as grievous to be borne, Mahometanism is manifestly defective in the essentials of Salvation. It provides no Atonement for sin, and is, therefore, merely a *Covenant of works*, a *Law unto Condemnation*. Faith in Mahomet is proposed, indeed, as the grand *succedaneum;* and *his* intercession is regarded as all-sufficient. But it is Faith in one who had no merits of his own to supply our insufficiency; and trust in the Intercession of one who was a most notorious and profligate sinner. Neither are the terms on which this Intercession is to be obtained clearly set forth Repentance is but slightly,

[m] Heb. ix. 10. [n] Gal. iv. 9.

if at all, enforced as a condition of forgiveness: while the Grace of God, to keep men in their duty, is entirely passed over. Instead of these consolatory doctrines, the only provision made is that of transferring either the good works or the sins of one person to another, so as to save some at the expense of others; in direct contradiction to Sacred Writ, which declares that "the soul that sin-"neth *it* shall die[o]," and that "none can by "any means redeem his brother, nor give to "God a ransom for him[p]." Here then is a Religion without a Sacrifice for sin, without a Redeemer, without a Mediator, without a Priesthood, without a Church, without Sacraments, without the means of Grace or the hope of Glory. But a Religion without these is to us no Religion at all; since it is essential to the Religion of fallen and sinful creatures to make provision for their Salvation and their Acceptance with God, by other means than their own unworthy and defective performances.

It were easy to extend these observations to almost every peculiar feature of the Koran; particularly to its doctrine of absolute and unqualified *Predestination*, which appears to be carried by all true Mahometans so far as

[o] Ezek. xviii. 4. [p] Ps. xlix. 7.

to make God the direct Author and Instigator of Evil; representing him as the *Cause of Causes*, in such a sense as to interpret his *permission* of evil into an *approbation* of it, and to regard the most heinous enormities as *sanctioned by His Will*. By this doctrine, Satan himself seems to be transferred to the throne of God, and made joint-arbiter with the Almighty of good and evil!

What shall we say likewise to the gross and unhallowed representations of *the Mahometan Paradise;* where every thing which can gratify a corrupt imagination, and administer to the depraved lusts of mankind, is held out as the perfection of excellence and bliss? If "out of the abundance of the "heart the mouth speaketh;"—if "a tree is "known by its fruit;"—if "the works of the "flesh are manifest," and are contrary to the Spirit of God;—what further proof need we of the character of its Author, who, even on the awful subject of Eternal Life, thus revels in sensuality and lust?

But, without entering further into the *internal* evidence of the falsehood of Mahometanism, it can hardly escape our observation, that it differs essentially from both Judaism and Christianity, in that it is wholly unsupported by *Facts* of such a nature as

indicate a Divine origin. It has no foundation of this kind It arises out of nothing that can give it stability or coherence. Its Author produced no *evidence* to attest his pretensions; did nothing, to give his followers any ground of trust in him as a messenger sent from God. Here were neither signs nor tokens that could inspire hope and confidence. None could say of him that "he went about doing good." None could say that either his life or his death gave credibility to his doctrines. He "bore record "of himself," and brought no testimony to corroborate his record. The unsupported assertion of a bold, licentious, and profligate adventurer, was all that so many millions of dupes have since relied upon, in the most momentous of all concerns, their everlasting welfare.

This is the more remarkable, as Mahomet affords, perhaps, the first instance in which the Arch-Deceiver of mankind attempted to propagate his delusions without the semblance, at least, of *Miracles*. Paganism, in all its odious varieties, *appeared* to be upholden by something of this kind. Hence, many have attributed the "lying wonders" of the Heathen world to the direct operation of evil spirits: and not without plausible

grounds; inasmuch as before the fall of Paganism in the Roman Empire, there were phenomena of such a kind, not unfrequent in the world, as might be thought to indicate preternatural powers, exerted in the cause of falsehood and error. Whereas, since that period, this power of Satan (if such it were) appears to have been greatly abridged, if not wholly destroyed: for, though Miracles have often been alleged in later times for sinister purposes, yet these may, for the most part, easily be traced to mere human contrivance. If this observation be just, it will appear the less surprising that the Evil Spirit should suggest to Mahomet, (his instrument in this new and grand scheme of apostasy) the policy of declining to give such a proof of his Divine mission.

Yet with what futile, nay, with what impious arguments, did he vindicate this omission! He denied not that Moses and Christ had wrought Miracles to prove that they were sent from God; but he contended that their Miracles had been found *insufficient* for the end proposed. What was this but virtually charging the Deity with incapacity and folly; with having tried means inadequate to his purposes; nay, with having exposed his weakness and want of foresight to

the scorn and derision of mankind? The impiety of such insinuations is rendered yet more striking, when we consider what had been actually effected by means of those very Miracles which Mahomet would thus depreciate. Was it not by *Miracles* that the law of Moses was upholden as of Divine authority, throughout a period of five hundred years, during which the rest of mankind were sunk in ignorance and idolatry? Was it not by *Miracles* that the Gospel was established, in defiance of all the powers of earth and hell combined against it, and rendered triumphant, after a struggle of several centuries with unparalleled difficulties and dangers? Who, then, was this daring, this shameless calumniator, that, to screen himself from detection and derision, should contumeliously arraign the counsels of the Almighty, and brand his Dispensations with ignominy and reproach? Vain must be the attempt to acquit Mahomet, in this instance, of blasphemy against the Most High: and we cannot but marvel at the strange infatuation of those who listened to such reasoning, without laughing it to scorn, or devoting it to just execration.

But while we thus reprobate the impiety as well as absurdity of Mahometanism, it

behoves us well to consider, how nearly it is allied to *every* religious system of merely *human* invention in this one respect, *that it makes no provision for man's Redemption.* It deprives men of that only foundation whereon to rest their hopes, an *Atonement for sin.* The Koran points out no such resource. It takes it not into the account of those things which are necessary for man. It promises, indeed, enjoyments (such as they are) in a future state, the reward of implicit faith in the Prophet; and it threatens punishments most dreadful, to those who reject his claims. But, as Mahomet wrought no *Miracles* to shew that he was able to fulfil these promises, so neither did he profess to ensure them to his followers by making, either in his life or death, any proper *Expiation* or *Satisfaction* for their sins.

It might, therefore, well have been said to this arrogant Impostor, "What *pledge* do you "give us of our acceptance with God? Who "is to cleanse us from sin? Who is to put "us into a state in which we may stand be-"fore a God who is of purer eyes than to "behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity? "—We know from the Scriptures, and from "sad experience, that man is born in sin, "and that every soul of man doeth evil and

" is guilty before God. Our only hope and " trust, therefore, must be in a Saviour, who " is both a Sacrifice for sin and who hath so " entirely fulfilled the law of Righteousness " and Holiness as to merit for others that " which they cannot merit for themselves. " This provision is made for us in the Gos- " pel, and in that only. Before as well as " since the coming of Christ, believers have " been accepted through *Faith* in that Re- " demption which by His coming was per- " fected and completed. Hitherto, in every " Dispensation of God to man the same ob- " ject has been made manifest, that of minis- " tering Salvation through his beloved Son, " 'the Author and Finisher of our Faith[q].' " But now that you would deprive us of this " our hope and refuge, direct us where to " look for an adequate substitute. Shew us " Him, who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the " *Life*[r]" also; Him, 'who of God is made " unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and " Sanctification, and Redemption[s],' before " you call upon us to renounce our former " creed and to trust in your's."

Such might justly have been the language of all to whom this Impostor addressed his pernicious scheme: and to such language he

[q] Heb. xii. 2. [r] John xiv. 6. [s] 1 Cor. i. 30.

could have made no reply; his system being in these respects utterly delusive, and destitute of any solid ground of hope. It speaks no peace to the conscience; it offers no remedy for the wounded spirit; but, like the dreary schemes of Deism and Socinianism, abandons the soul just in the very point where her wants are most craving and importunate.

But, after all that can be urged against this miserable and delusive scheme, it may be said, "How comes it to pass, that a God of "mercy and truth, after signally displaying "his power in the establishment of Christi- "anity, and enabling it to triumph over so "many and potent adversaries, should per- "mit this work of Satan almost to obliterate "every trace of the Gospel, throughout many "populous and extensive countries?"

Mahometans cease not to urge this triumph of their religion over our's, as a proof of its Divine authority:—and upon the Mahometan notion of absolute Predestination, which makes God the immediate Author of evil as well as good, and regards the *success* of any project, however mischievous and absurd, as testifying the Divine approbation; the argument would indeed be unanswerable. But by such reasoning Satan himself might be regarded as

enjoying the Divine favour; since, throughout the world, it is manifest that incalculable numbers have been the continual victims of his malice, both those who resist the truth and those who hold it in unrighteousness. The Holy Scriptures, however, instruct us that worldly success is no certain proof of Divine favour; that error and falsehood are frequently suffered to prevail, for the trial of men's faith, or for the punishment of their disobedience and neglect of the truth; and that God blinds the understandings, and hardens the hearts, of those who wilfully forsake him, so that they can neither see, nor hear, nor perceive as they ought to do.

Nor will they who duly consider the depravity and corruption of mankind wonder that such a system as the Koran should prevail with very many, to relinquish the pure and perfect doctrine of the Gospel. One great argument for the Divine interposition in the propagation of Christianity, arises from its not being a doctrine calculated to win the corrupt affections of man; and its having, in consequence, especial difficulties to encounter. Whereas the Koran inculcates principles and sentiments of such a kind as find but too ready access to the human heart. The weapons of its warfare are carnal; its wisdom is "earthly,

"sensual, devilish:" and such weapons and such wisdom must always be expected to prevail, where God does not interpose to prevent them. In the instance of the Gospel, his interposition to this effect was manifest to every eye that was open to behold it. In that of the Koran, worldly power and cunning were suffered to prevail; God seeing fit to permit them to do so, for the chastisement of his lukewarm and unfaithful people, who were daily corrupting the Faith and departing from "sound doctrine." The lesson, therefore, which it teaches us is an awful one, as to the danger of relinquishing the pure word of God for heretical innovations. But the more the argument respecting the propagation of Christianity and Mahometanism is examined, the stronger will be the proof of the spurious pretensions of the one, and the Divine authority of the other.

Are we not, then, fully warranted in considering the Mahometan Imposture as one link in that vast chain of falsehood and impiety, which the Author and Worker of all Spiritual Evil has fabricated, for enthralling mankind in bondage and misery? and does not the critical period at which it came forth serve to place the artifice of the Deceiver in the strongest point of view? Christianity

had just completed its triumph over Paganism, both in the Eastern and Western Empires. Thus one grand work of Satan, carried on almost from the Fall of man to that period, was utterly overthrown. To revive Polytheism in the civilized world seemed impossible. To disprove the truth of Christianity was equally so. A third device remained, which, by seeming to co-operate with the Gospel Dispensation, should in effect annul it, and deceive mankind to their destruction. Such was the Religion of Mahomet; a gross composition of truth and falsehood; a system in which the Scripture itself was made the instrument of error, and of defeating the very purpose for which it was given to mankind.

A space of nearly twelve hundred years has elapsed, since this dire superstition was first manifested to the world: and dreadful it is to reflect upon the havoc which it has made, both among the souls and bodies of men, in the course of its destructive progress. Among its deluded votaries, it is rare to meet with any who will listen to argument or remonstrance, and who do not cherish the most inveterate hatred towards the professors of the Gospel. In the present day, indeed, the countries submitted to its yoke are for

the most part as debased in political, civil, and literary knowledge, as they are in religion: so that we are scarcely surprised at their ignorance and infatuation. The time has been, however, when the people who submitted to this yoke were far from being despicable or undistinguished in letters as well as in arms; and when Mahometanism had its subtle, its acute, and even learned advocates, while the Christian world was almost enveloped in ignorance and darkness.

But, whatever may have been the success of this imposture, and however deplorable the effects, we have the consolation of knowing that the same Scriptures which predicted its rise and progress, have no less distinctly warned us of its overthrow. Its decline has long been observable; and, of late time, the symptoms of decay are such as to excite strong expectations of its entire dissolution, and, perhaps, at no very distant period. Long, therefore, as its reign has been, and proud as may have been the triumph of Satan and his agents in the miseries hereby produced, the faithful servant of Christ has no cause to consider this as an obstacle to the ultimate triumph of the Gospel. On the contrary, observing in it the fulfilment of some most remarkable prophecies in Holy

Writ, he will the more confidently anticipate its downfall. He will watch with patient expectation the fearful revolutions of States and Empires, passing away "at the chiding "of the Lord and the blasting of the breath "of his displeasure[t]:" and he will joyfully look up, "as his Redemption draweth nigh[u]," to that period, when "the kingdoms of this "world shall become the kingdoms of our "Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign "for ever and ever[x]."

[t] Ps. xviii. 15. [u] Luke xxi. 28. [x] Rev. xi. 15.

SERMON VII.

MATT. xiii. 25.

While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares.

THAT the inestimable gift of the Gospel is not only worthy of our utmost solicitude to preserve it, but that its preservation is made to depend, in a considerable degree, upon the exertion and vigilance of those for whose benefit it is intended; is a truth often inculcated in the Holy Scriptures. In the passage here quoted from our Lord's Parable of the Tares, an intimation is given that when the great Adversary of our Redemption is most successful in his machinations, it is through the inadvertency and supineness of mankind that he becomes so. History bears ample testimony to the truth of this representation. From the separation of the Jews as the chosen people of God to the opening of the door of Faith to the Gentile world, and from that period to the present day, many are the instances in which the enemy has taken ad-

vantage of the carelessness or indifference of those to whom the sacred treasures of Divine truth have been entrusted: and we may venture to assert, that even persecution and open hostility have not been more prejudicial to the interests of the Gospel, than that spirit of slumber and inconsideration on the part of its professors, which renders them insensible to the encroachments of the Adversary, and regardless of his insidious progress.

The subject upon which we are now about to enter, is particularly fitted to call forth reflections of this nature. Hitherto we have watched the contest between Christ and Belial, in times of considerable light and knowledge; when, notwithstanding the strength and fury of its opponents, the most strenuous efforts were made to uphold the cause of Truth. This earnest attachment to pure and unadulterated Christianity had, indeed, begun to abate, and was very considerably diminished, even before the appearance of the impostor Mahomet. But we have now to take a view of the Christian world in its most neglected and deplorable state, during what are usually called the Middle Ages, a long and dreary space of eight hundred years, from the rise of the Eastern and Western Antichrists to the dawn of the Protestant

Reformation. In this part of our undertaking, our attention will not be confined, as heretofore, to some one particular system of Infidelity, or specific plan of hostility pursued against the Gospel; but we shall have to trace the continued labours of the Evil Spirit in combining a variety of plans for its destruction, and to detect his secret agency in laying the foundation of future and more formidable attacks. It will be requisite to develope (as far as the obscurity of the subject will permit) his deep-laid machinations; and to disclose the seeds of falsehood and impiety which, during the long sleep of this dark period, were sown abundantly in the Christian world, and afterwards brought forth the most noxious fruits.

It can hardly escape our observation, on the first general view of this extensive subject, that the greater part of the ignorance and corruption which prevailed in the Middle ages is to be ascribed to the two great Anti-Christian Powers, the Mahometan and the Papal, which sprang up in the Eastern and Western Empires at nearly the same juncture of time. Temporal and spiritual tyranny were united in each of the monstrous systems supported by these powers; and "the Prince of this world" sought by

means of both to bring mankind under his cruel yoke. Both operated, though in different ways, to obscure the knowledge of pure Religion, and to promote the increase of Superstition and of Unbelief. Fabulous Legends, uncertain Traditions, and corrupt interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, were characteristic of both. In other respects they widely differed. Popery gloried in the Cross and strenuously maintained all the *essentials* of the Christian Faith, though it loaded it with *non-essentials* and brought it into contempt by a corrupt admixture of human inventions with the word of God. Mahometanism, though acknowledging the divine mission of Jesus, despised the Cross, renounced the saving truths of the Gospel, and asserted a New Revelation from God, for the purpose of subverting its fundamental doctrines. In these respects, the latter wore the aspect of a direct and open Apostasy; the former "held the faith," though neither in "the unity of the spirit, nor in "the bond of peace." Through the medium of Popery, the Church was still preserved; its Priesthood was perpetuated in regular succession from the Apostles; and its members were admitted into Covenant with God, through the initiatory Sacrament of

Baptism administered by persons duly and lawfully ordained. But by Mahometanism, the Church was annihilated, its Priesthood done away, its Sacraments rejected, and the whole of the Christian Covenant superseded and annulled. The former, therefore, admitted of correction; so that, by the blessing of God upon the exertions of the Reformers, Christianity has been, in several countries, purged of Popish errors and restored almost to its primitive purity: whilst the latter seems only to wait the avenging arm of Heaven, and, admitting of no remedy, to call for absolute excision.

But let us take a nearer view of the insidious proceedings of the great Adversary of the Gospel through this dark and turbulent period.

In treating of the state of the Church during the Middle Ages, it is difficult to separate its *religious* from its *political* concerns; a difficulty, which arises from one of the most striking features of those times, the *secularity* of its rulers, and their almost exclusive attention to temporal aggrandizement. The scandalous struggles for superiority between the Bishops of Rome and the Patriarchs of Constantinople, in which the former manifested an eager desire to

usurp an absolute authority over every Church in Christendom, served but as the prelude to a still further contest between the Pontifical and Imperial authorities for the Supremacy in civil as well as in Ecclesiastical power. In this unbecoming warfare, it too plainly appeared that the spiritual design of the Gospel was almost overlooked, in the pursuit of temporal power; and that the kingdom of Christ was chiefly valued as a kingdom of this world. Instead of an establishment conformable to that described in Holy Writ, when "Kings should be "the nursing-Fathers and Queens the nurs-"ing-Mothers" of the Church, the ambitious spirits who filled the See of Rome aspired to the highest authority in secular concerns, and sought to establish an uncontrollable dominion as earthly Potentates, by asserting a Supremacy of temporal jurisdiction over almost every Sovereign in Christendom.

In this assumption of secular power, we discover the seeds of those pernicious principles, which, in after-times, failed not to produce confusion and mischief, and to make the Church itself the victim of its own arrogance. By confounding Civil and Ecclesiastical authority, the just prerogatives of both were taken away; an attempt was made to

identify powers perfectly distinct from each other; and, instead of preserving that harmony and co-operation which their Divine Author intended should subsist between them, a pretext was afforded for the assertion of such authority on the part of the State, as could not be exercised without subverting the Constitution of the Church and destroying its very existence. In other words, the Church, by encroaching on the power of the State, provoked the State to usurp the power of the Church, and gave occasion to a ruinous conflict between both, to the great scandal of Religion, and to the injury of its just and unalienable rights.

That these remarks are not irrelevant to our present inquiry, will be apparent, when we consider how strenuously Infidelity, in later times, has been employed in endeavouring to subvert Christianity, by first merging its authority in that of the State, and then using the power of the State to effect its total destruction. The Papacy may be considered as having taught this lesson to the enemies of the Gospel, by its unnatural and iniquitous attempts to confound the relations between temporal and spiritual authority. Here, therefore, we again discern the secret workings of that Deceiver, who too

often succeeds in the insinuation of such evil sentiments into the professors of the Gospel, as eventually promote *his* purposes, and work *their* destruction.

Nor is this the only instance in which worldly policy appears as a characteristic feature of the Church, during these Middle Ages. It is discernible even in some of those transactions which have the greatest appearance of piety, and of an ardent desire to diffuse the spiritual benefits of the Gospel.

The conversion of several barbarous nations to the Christian Faith, under the auspices of the Papal power or of Potentates connected with it, will be found to savour more of the worldly Conqueror than of the disinterested Preacher of the Gospel.—As if Christians had learnt the art of proselytism from Mahomet, the *Sword*, in almost every instance, supplied the place of argument or persuasion; and the terrors of vassalage and extirpation operated more in producing converts, than the glad tidings of spiritual instruction and consolation.

In like manner, those romantic expeditions which for three centuries occupied the attention of all Europe, under the denomination of Crusades or Holy Wars to rescue the

Cross from the insults of Infidels, can hardly be considered as originating in pure and well-regulated Christian principles. Much, indeed, may be urged in their behalf on the score of bitter provocations from those against whom they were undertaken: and every one who is animated by the honest fervour of religious zeal, must admire, in many of the Crusaders, their intrepidity of spirit and their glowing attachment to the Cross of Christ. But when we scrutinize the characters and conduct of some chief movers in the enterprise, (more especially of the Pontiffs who summoned Europe to embark in it) we cannot but hesitate in ascribing *to them* such honourable and disinterested motives: and when we view the subsequent behaviour of many of these Champions of the Faith, betraying evident tokens of a sanguinary, vindictive, or avaricious spirit, we lose almost all our commiseration for the unhappy termination of their career, in regarding it as the just reward of their misconduct.

Similar observations might be applied to the general conduct of the Christian states during the Middle Ages, towards those who opposed the Faith, whether Heathens, Saracens, or Jews; all of whom experienced in their turn such acts of cruelty and such vin-

dictive retaliation of injuries, as disgraced the profession of the Gospel, and contributed greatly to the increase of concealed Infidels, as well as of open enemies to the Truth. More especially must we consider the establishment of the *Inquisition*, in the thirteenth and fourteenth Centuries, as one of the foulest blots in the annals of the Church:—since, however it might avail towards producing a semblance of unanimity, or a forced acquiescence in the unjust usurpations of the Romish Church, its tendency to generate secret disaffection to Christianity itself (which was thus used as an engine or a pretext of cruelty and oppression) cannot be doubted.

Abundant also were the tares of heresy, of superstition, and of infidelity, which were sown during this long night of spiritual darkness. Corruptions both in faith and practice increased to such magnitude and extent, as would seem almost incredible to those who have not well studied the perverseness of the human heart. Sometimes the most frivolous subjects of dispute sufficed to distract the Christian world, and to produce implacable animosity and hatred. At other times, the most pernicious errors were admitted without reluctance. For one entire Century the

Church was divided between the advocates and the opponents of *Image Worship;* a contest, decided at last in favour of the votaries of Idolatry; who adhered to their superstitious veneration for images, relics, and every other foppery of Paganism, with far more tenacious regard than they did to the essential doctrines of Salvation. In the next Century, polemical acrimony was roused by a discussion of the knotty points of Predestination and Transubstantiation; the latter of which obtained a signal triumph over Reason and the Scriptures. Every error and corruption of Popery was, about this period, established and confirmed: and now it was, that in Pope Nicholas was remarkably verified St. Paul's prediction of "the man of "sin," speaking of himself as GOD, and as the deputed Judge of the earth.

It were almost an endless task, to detail, from the histories of this and the succeeding Centuries before the Reformation, the continual schisms and controversies between the Eastern and Western Churches; the rapid succession of Popes of the most infamous character; the almost universal ignorance and corruption of the Clergy; the lying wonders of monkish legends; the ab-

solute prohibition of the use of the Scriptures among the Laity; the scandalous vices which hence prevailed among all orders and descriptions of men; the revival of old heresies and the fabrication of new ones; in short, that almost general defection from purity and truth, which gave to the Christian world the appearance of a land where men "sat in darkness and in the shadow of "death," rather than where the light of the Gospel had arisen and "the glory of the "Lord had been revealed."

But it is to other causes, in conjunction with this general debasement of the Christian character, that we are to ascribe this success of the Evil One in raising up enemies to the Gospel. Amidst the darkness which enveloped mankind, though but few rays of true light broke in upon them, many a meteor of false wisdom was pursued with eagerness, oftentimes seducing its pursuers into inextricable difficulties and dangers. That spirit of *philosophizing* upon religious subjects which had more or less prevailed from the earliest ages of the Gospel, arose, immediately upon the revival of letters in Europe, with renewed strength and vigour. The Philosophy of this period is, indeed, a

subject so curious in itself and so closely connected with the history of Religion, as to demand particular consideration.

In the earliest ages of the Gospel, the Philosophy which prevailed was chiefly of the *Platonic* school. Platonism, with a corrupt mixture of Oriental learning, was much esteemed even by the Fathers of the Church; some of whom appear to have considered it as derived, in part at least, from Divine Revelation, imperfectly handed down through the medium of Tradition. They were also, it is probable, the more inclined to its cultivation, from a persuasion of its utility in defending Christianity against Unbelievers. Hence their occasional recourse to it as a help to the interpretation of the Gospel; preserving at the same time such a veneration for the Holy Scriptures, as to admit nothing into their Creed which plainly militated against them. Considerable mischief, however, ensued from this practice. The doctrines of the Church were imperceptibly corrupted. Believers receded more and more from the simplicity of Christian Truth; while the hands of Infidels were strengthened by the sanction which thus seemed to be given to that Philosophy which it was their intention to introduce as a substitute

for the Gospel. Thus did Christianity suffer considerably from the indiscretion of its Advocates, as well as from the insidious designs of its Adversaries.

But, about the beginning of the seventh Century a new turn was given to the pursuits of Philosophy; and the system of Aristotle, which had hitherto been little regarded, or only in part admitted into the mixed Philosophy of the preceding ages, began to be exclusively studied, and applied to the subject of Revealed Religion.

The Saracens appear to have been the first who revived the Aristotelian system; which, however useful and excellent in its *logical* department, contains, with respect to its *physical* and *metaphysical* tenets, many positions not easily reconcilable with Scripture. This Philosophy gradually penetrated the darkness of Western Europe, and became the favourite study of all who distinguished themselves in the revival of letters. It ruled with almost undivided sway in the literary world from the eleventh to the sixteenth Century; during the greater part of which period, questions the most frivolous became the chief object of attention; the reins were given to presumptuous speculation; and the introduction of dialectic

and metaphysical subtleties into the hallowed recesses of Theology gave rise to many novel and dangerous opinions.

From this system sprang the celebrated Scholastic Philosophy of those times; the application of which to subjects of Divinity was probably introduced for the chief purpose of defending the various corruptions and superstitions of the Church of Rome; whose indefatigable advocates found no weapons so well adapted to that purpose as those which this newly-revived Philosophy supplied.

Among these Scholastics, however, were men of distinguished talents, and who in a more enlightened age might probably have obtained the highest honours in the learned world. But their labours were too generally characterized by a rage for abstruse researches and for perverse disputation, which threw an air of obscurity and perplexity over the simplest and most important truths. Many of their writings on religious subjects are remarkable also for a spirit of rash conjecture, or bold and presumptuous assertion, ill becoming the interpreters of God's word: whilst in almost all are to be found such cavillings and such equivocations, as tend to confound truth with falsehood and give un-

certainty to the clearest positions both of Reason and of Scripture. Vanity, rather than the love of Truth, encouraged these pursuits; which, affording scope for an ostentatious display of intellectual talents, gave occasion to contests for mere literary fame; wherein men "sought honour one of another, "and not the honour which cometh of God "only[y]."

It is, indeed, characteristic of the Schoolmen, that, far from reverencing the simple truths of Religion, or attaining to any clearer knowledge of them by these innumerable controversies, they were employed chiefly upon what the Apostle calls "foolish ques-"tions," which "gender strifes[z];" fond of logomachies; and setting little value upon any but the most intricate and unedifying disquisitions. At the same time, their knowledge of the Aristotelian Philosophy, to which they were so immoderately attached, was but imperfect; being derived chiefly through the medium of corrupt translations from the Arabic into the Latin language, and blended with the fanciful opinions of Arabian Commentators. It is easy to conceive what pernicious effects such learning as this must produce,

[y] John v. 44. [z] 2 Tim. ii. 23.

when applied to the study of the Scriptures and to the subject of Sacred Truth; what confusion of principles; what an intermixture of "Philosophy falsely so called" with the doctrines of Revelation; what hazardous researches into Divine mysteries; and what an arbitrary exercise of human judgment in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Arguments of a solid and convincing kind were discarded, in order to shew the ingenuity of the disputant in framing defences of more subtle and exquisite contrivance. Thus the mind lost its relish for plain unadulterated truth, and could only be gratified by such delusive and sophisticated reasonings as pampered the imagination, without improving the understanding.

The consequences of indulging this unnatural and destructive appetite were such as might reasonably be expected. Perplexity became the chief object in almost every discussion. The love of Truth gave way to doubt and disputation: what was said to-day was unsaid to-morrow; and men were "ever "learning," without being "able to come to "the knowledge of the truth[a]."

Nay, more;—to such lengths did some of

[a] 2 Tim. iii. 7.

these Schoolmen proceed, that, when accused of advancing tenets repugnant to the Scriptures, instead of repelling the accusation, they had recourse to the dangerous position that opinions might be *philosophically true, yet theologically false;* a position obviously mischievous in its principle, and opening a door for the admission of Infidelity into the very bosom of the Church. We accordingly learn from the historians of those times, that several persons of great eminence in the Church, as well as in the State, were known to be deeply tinctured with Infidelity and even with Atheistical opinions. Many are recorded to have made "shipwreck of their faith;" and few, perhaps, among those who were of the highest reputation for learning, were entirely uninfected with the spirit of Libertinism which so generally prevailed. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when a contentious Philosophy was allowed to dispute the palm with Theology, and to assume the character of an overbearing superior rather than that of an humble handmaid to Divine Truth?

Such was the Scholastic Theology of the Middle Ages. The inroads which it made upon the Christian Faith, and the advantage which it gave to the enemies of the Gospel,

are to be estimated, however, not so much by its immediate effects as by its remoter consequences. By introducing heterogeneous principles of Physics and Metaphysics into the study of Revealed Religion, and by giving rise to a pernicious habit of regarding every truth, whether derived from the senses, from reasoning, or from Scripture, as a fit subject for disputation; it engendered that monster *Scepticism*, to whom, in these latter days, the great Adversary of mankind has so many obligations. The sacred Oracles were laid prostrate at the feet of dogmatical and presumptuous Vanity; and the boundaries of Reason and Revelation were broken down.

Christianity being reduced to this deplorable state, even by those who were most solemnly pledged to maintain its cause, we are not to wonder that Jews and Mahometans, as well as Pagans and other Infidels, were encouraged to reproach and vilify the Faith professed by such unworthy disciples.

The Gospel, indeed, suffered very considerably from opponents of every description. Idolatrous Barbarians, still existing in numerous hordes, (particularly in the North of Europe,) ceased not to persecute it with relentless fury, till it pleased God to dispose them to listen to the word of Truth which was

preached to them, or till they were subdued, in their turn, by means of compulsion and violence. From the reign of Charlemagne to the conversion of Lithuania in the fourteenth Century, much of the history of the times is occupied in recording the frequent outrages of these savage tribes in the Western empire, as well as of the Saracens in the East.

The Jews also, ever watchful to exercise their hatred towards the disciples of the crucified Messiah, make a conspicuous figure in the annals of this period. From the writings of Rabanus Maurus in the ninth Century, we learn that they disseminated the most horrible libels on our Blessed Saviour and his Religion; and were so fanatically enraged against him as to imagine that their prayers to God could not be acceptable, unless they included an express malediction of Jesus Christ. Their frequently confederating with the Saracens in opposition to Christianity is also very remarkable, and shews to what unnatural alliances the enemies of Truth are driven, to strengthen a weak and defenceless cause. Their eagerness in following every pretended Messiah that appeared, (of whom no fewer than *ten* are mentioned to have arisen in the course of the twelfth century only,) is another striking proof of their gross

infatuation. Not a century, perhaps, can be named, in which we do not find the labours of the Church called forth in defence of the Gospel against these its inveterate enemies.

Much of this hostility may undoubtedly be ascribed to the extreme severity, or rather, barbarous persecution, which the Jews from time to time experienced under Christian governments, and which it would be a vain attempt to vindicate upon the principles of Christianity, however heinous the provocations might be on the part of these obstinate and implacable offenders. But we shall not form an adequate notion of the growth or extent of Jewish Infidelity, without an examination of the *Cabalistical Theology;* which was cultivated with wonderful assiduity by this perverse people, and tended to confirm them more and more in their departure from religious truth.

This strange and anomalous production almost defies analysis. It pretends to arrive at a knowledge of Divine things, not, as true Philosophy would do, by deductions from some generally acknowledged principles of Science, nor, according to the rules of sound Theology, by reference to Truths made known through the medium of Divine Revelation;

but, by a mixture of the most wild and incongruous tenets of various philosophical systems with unauthorized *Traditions*, presumed to be of Divine authority, yet totally irreconcilable with those Scriptures which the Jews *professed* to reverence as the word of God. Hence a confused mass of Scripture, Tradition, Physics, and Metaphysics, in which the imagination was left to wander, without any guide to direct it, or any rule of interpretation to preserve it from deviating into the most extravagant and pernicious errors.

The *origin* of this singular phænomenon in the history of the human mind it is difficult to ascertain. For this system must not be confounded with the genuine Cabala, or Tradition, held by the ancient Jews before the coming of Christ; which was rather a mode of *interpreting* the written Law and the Prophets, by commentaries of established authority in the synagogue, than an attempt of unauthorized individuals to frame for themselves, or to impose upon others, a code of Philosophical Divinity. The Cabalistic Theology of the Middle Ages was evidently derived from more impure sources. In its earliest state, we may discover in it many vestiges of the ancient Egyptian, Pythagorean,

and Platonic systems. As we advance farther towards the time of the revival of letters both in the East and in the West, the subtleties of the Peripatetic Philosophy give it a new aspect; and among the labours of its still more recent expositors, are found some tenets of almost every eccentric or mystical sect, contributing to render it a still more confused and inexplicable jargon.

Such being the composition of Cabalistic science, we cannot be surprised, if it contain many things incapable of proof, many that are evidently repugnant to truth, and still more that are utterly unintelligible. To attempt an examination of it upon *Scripture* principles, were a waste of time; and to refute it seriously as a *philosophical* system, were hardly less so. That, in many instances, the Cabalistic writers themselves understood not what they wrote, is the most probable and, perhaps, the most favourable conjecture that can be made for them; since, even in those passages which are most intelligible, we are continually disgusted by profane reveries, equalling, if not exceeding in absurdity, the exploded follies of the Valentinians, the Gnostics, and other similar fanatics of older date.—Nay more; it is evident, that whatever opinion may have been entertained by

the Jews themselves of the sublime and recondite wisdom of this wretched attempt at Divine Philosophy, it is much more nearly allied to absolute Infidelity, to Deism, and even Atheism, than to true Religion. To instance in one point only, among many others; it is one of its fundamental principles that every thing emanates *necessarily* from the Deity as the fountain of its being, without any act of volition on the part of its Creator; and that at the expiration of its separate state of existence, it is resolved again into the Divine essence. Here we see that dangerous *pantheistic* notion, which has nothing to support it but vain imagination; which is in direct contradiction to Holy Writ; and which, when admitted, strikes at the root of all Religion, by divesting the soul of its immortality, and the Creator of his moral and even physical attributes.

Can we, then, sufficiently express our horror and astonishment, that the Jews, the very people whose Religion was wholly built on Divine Revelation and upholden by a visible Theocracy, and through whom the knowledge of the Most High had been manifested to the world;—should so far forget the original foundations of their belief, as to be captivated by the wildest and most visionary speculations

that ever issued from the human brain; and to substitute for the pure doctrines of God's word the most despicable remnants of false Philosophy and fabulous Tradition? What a melancholy instance does this afford of the danger of corrupting Divine Truths by human inventions; and of the awful consequences of provoking the Almighty, by apostasy from the Faith, to give up his creatures to error and infatuation!

It is manifest, indeed, that the farther the Jews advanced in their hostility to the Christian Religion, the greater were the absurdities admitted into their theological Creed. In the Rabbinical treatises published towards the latter end of this period, such gross expressions are used relative to the Supreme Being, such ridiculous and incredible stories are recorded, such palpable forgeries and narratives of spurious miracles are intermixed with Scripture truth and barbarous Philosophy; that we stand equally aghast at the monstrous infatuation of those who could receive such systems as true, and the daring impiety of those who could devise them.

It is true that Maimonides towards the end of the eleventh Century, and other learned Jews at different periods, laboured to construct a more plausible system from these heteroge-

neous materials, and endeavoured to simplify the Jewish Theology, by lopping off some of the redundancies of the Cabalistic Philosophy, and by interpreting its doctrines in a sense more consonant with Scripture. But even these failed in their attempt; many errors being still retained in their writings, respecting the nature and attributes of God, the Creation, the world of Spirits, the nature of Man, and the means of his Justification, which plainly evince their inability to reconcile the received opinions of the Rabbies with the pure, unadulterated doctrines of Holy Writ.

But the perverseness of the Jews appears in a yet stronger light, when we consider their various and contradictory representations at different times concerning the expected Messiah. Greatly as they had misunderstood and falsified the character delivered of him in the prophetical writings, even at, and before, the time of our Lord's appearance; yet the opinions which they afterwards maintained concerning him were marked by still more palpable absurdities. Baffled in their former calculations as to the time of his appearance, they entangled themselves more and more in inextricable difficulties, by endeavouring to fix its date; till at last, overcome with disappointment, vexation, and shame,

they gave up the point in despair. They even proceeded so far as to utter anathemas against those who should attempt the calculation of the times foretold by the Prophets; and they shut up all inquiries in the general and indefinite promise of the Messiah's appearance, *whenever Israel should repent*, whether at an earlier or a later period.

Equally contradictory to the Sacred Writings, and equally inconsistent with each other, were the characters which they assigned to the Messiah, and the tokens by which he was to be made known. These inconsistencies evidently arose from the impossibility of reconciling the Jewish Prophecies with their expectation of a temporal Prince. They were more generally agreed, however, upon some points which were at least equally at variance with the Scripture,—that the reign of the Messiah should be accompanied with blood and slaughter, and a judicial vengeance upon their enemies: and that the Jewish nation should be permitted to revel in sensual enjoyments, scarcely inferior to those of the Mahometan Paradise. On these points, many extravagancies are to be met with, in the writings of their most grave and learned Doctors. It is observable, nevertheless, that every Jewish Writer, however subtle or pro-

found, sinks under the attempt to overthrow that argument which has constantly been urged against them, respecting the *time* when the Messiah should appear. This is a millstone about the neck of Judaism, which it never has been, and never will be, able to shake off.

But as we arrive at a still later period of Jewish history, we meet with attempts even of a more flagitious nature than these to bring Christianity into contempt and abhorrence. From the thirteenth Century to the end of the fifteenth, to such a pitch had their enmity arisen as to stimulate them to the foulest calumnies and most atrocious falsehoods. Nothing which the imagination could invent, however improbable and incoherent, was omitted, to infuriate their disciples against the very name of Christ. The mass of absurdity and blasphemy heaped together in those writings which bid defiance to history, chronology, and even to moral and physical possibility, is, perhaps, without a parallel. It is remarkable, however, that as if conscious that these writings would not bear the light, their infamous authors studiously concealed them from all but persons of their own persuasion. This might, indeed, be chiefly owing to their dread of the punishment which they knew awaited them, had they dared openly to

publish such outrages upon decency and truth. But when the diligence of learned Christians afterwards dragged them into view, it was evident that they were productions of such a nature as would not stand the test of fair examination, and that their authors were men who "loved darkness rather than light, "because their deeds were evil."

Thus much for the efforts of the *Jews*, the unceasing agents of Satan, in resisting the progress of the Gospel. If we pass from them to the disciples of *Mahomet*, similar features of perverseness and rancorous hatred will appear.

It has already been remarked, that at the time when Christianity was most obscured by barbarism and ignorance, Mahometanism was in possession of acute and even learned supporters. Notwithstanding its apparent tendency to debase the human faculties, literature and philosophy were cultivated in the countries which submitted to its yoke, for a considerable time before their revival in the Christian states of Europe; whither, indeed, they were transplanted chiefly by the Saracens. But wherever the Saracens obtained a footing, they not only introduced the Aristotelian and Oriental Philosophy in which they so much delighted; but brought with them

likewise a spirit of *proselytism*, and an ardour in the propagation of the Mahometan Faith, which manifested itself, as occasion offered, either in acts of violence and persecution, or in elaborate vindications of their Creed. In almost every Century of the Middle Ages, some traces may be discerned of their efforts in this *latter* mode of propagating their Religion. Perhaps, too, the injudicious attempts of some advocates of the Gospel (who, in their zeal to vindicate Christianity, blended with it an equal zeal in defence of the whole mass of Romish errors and superstitions) contributed rather to strengthen than to weaken or intimidate the Adversary. Yet there were not wanting solid and efficient defenders of the Christian Faith who successfully exposed the artifices, the malice, and the falsehoods, of these impugners of Sacred Truth. The Mahometans, moreover, as well as the Jews, began at an early period to intermix the studies of Philosophy with Theology; and, like them, in process of time, blended truth and fiction, Scripture and tradition, reason and imagination, in such variety of forms as to mock all attempts to reduce them to an intelligible system. Hence, many of the most admired commentators on the Koran were no less fanciful and absurd than

the Rabbinical expositors of the Old Testament; and equally contributed to introduce a pernicious taste for philosophizing upon Divine subjects.

The effects produced by these different causes, acting in concurrence with each other, could be no other than those of unhinging the minds of men, creating an indifference to truth, and tempting them to an entire Apostasy from Revealed Religion. That even this last effect was produced to a considerable extent, seems to be indisputable. It is evinced by the notorious, if not avowed, Infidelity of several persons in high and commanding stations, not excepting some of those who filled the Imperial Throne and even the Papal Chair. The more, indeed, we investigate the biographical records of those times, the more are we shocked at the libertinism, the profligacy of conduct, the licentiousness and even the Atheistical principles of not a few, whose rank, learning, and *sacred* offices, ought to have made them patterns of piety and virtue. In the thirteenth Century, more especially, there appear to have arisen Infidels of a most daring and undisguised character; open and declared advocates of the worst principles, and totally adverse to all

Revealed Religion. Of this we need no other proof, than the diligence of the few really learned and able defenders of Christianity in those ages, who were employed continually in combating the destructive notions that prevailed. This is sufficient evidence of the existence of the evil; and proves that the Enemy never wanted agents who were industrious in carrying on his infernal purposes.

When we reflect upon such a woful prostitution of the Divine gifts of Reason and Revelation as the history of those times exhibits, we are led to admire the Divine forbearance, which through so many ages graciously vouchsafed to contend with the obstinacy of the human race. We cannot but contemplate with gratitude the goodness of God, who "would not utterly take from "them his lovingkindness, nor suffer his "truth to fail[b];" and who gave such continual indications of his interposing Providence to preserve a remnant of the faithful from destruction. The Eastern Churches, however sunk in Idolatry and corruption, made a long and vigorous resistance to the unjust usurpations of the Roman Pontiffs. In the twelfth and following Centuries, the

[b] Ps. lxxxix. 33.

Waldenses and the Albigenses exerted themselves with great energy and encountered bitter persecutions, in their efforts to oppose the increasing tyranny of the Popes, and to effect that Reformation in Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice, without which the entire overthrow of Christianity seemed to be inevitable. In the fourteenth Century, a fresh beam of light broke in upon the almost benighted world. While many Writers of considerable ability were contending successfully against Jews, Mahometans, and other Infidels, our own countryman, Wickliffe, led the way in combating the errors and declaiming against the corruptions of the *Romish* Church. Coarse, indeed, if not sometimes rude and indecorous, were the attacks made by this zealous Reformer and those who immediately followed in his steps. But posterity owe too much to the *effect* of them, not to venerate the champions and recollect their services with gratitude. The eyes of the world were thus opened to the grievous and miserable bondage under which it had long laboured; and it must be confessed that the grievance warranted a more than usual exertion for its removal. This, however, is not the occasion for discussing the motives which actuated, or the means which

were adopted by the Protestant Reformers, for their release from the galling yoke of Papal tyranny and superstition; a subject which calls for distinct consideration.

In the mean while, reflections of great importance present themselves to the mind, on reviewing the dangers, the distresses, and the resources of that dark yet eventful period, which has thus rapidly passed under our consideration. Throughout the whole of it a struggle is seen to have been carried on, in which (for the punishment of those who slighted the Christian Faith, or who "held it in unrighteousness,") Satan was permitted to prevail in many instances, and to a very considerable extent. Men slumbered and slept; neglected their duty, or perverted it; regarded not the precious deposit entrusted to their care:—and "*the enemy came and sowed tares.*" He seized the opportunity of disseminating the most pernicious principles, with a view to prepare men for the utter abandonment of Divine Truth. *Christians* themselves he seduced by false Philosophy. The *Jews*, (after he had been driven from the Gentile world,) he found "swept and garnished," completely fitted to receive him; and he entered in, and made them sevenfold worse than before

Mahometans he still held in spiritual slavery and blindness. *Infidels* of every description he encouraged and strengthened by this distracted state of Religion; and drew them from "the fountain of living waters," to "hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns, "that can hold no water." In all this, however, we see him rather preparing *future* triumphs than accomplishing his *full* design. For it is in times of more general literature and science that we shall find him most active, and, perhaps, most successful. To the investigation of those times we are now bringing our inquiries. God grant, that this and all our researches into the dispensations of his Providence, for the preservation of the Gospel against its numerous foes, may have their due effect, in confirming our attachment to the Cross of Christ; so that whatever assaults it may yet be called upon to sustain we may "not be ashamed to confess "the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully "to fight under his banner, against sin, the "world, and the Devil, and to continue "Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto "our lives' end."

SERMON VIII.

2 Corinthians vi. 15.

What concord hath Christ with Belial?

St. Paul, ever zealous for the purity of the Gospel, which the idolatrous Gentile world had always a great propensity to corrupt, and desirous to warn the Corinthians in particular, who more especially stood in need of the admonition against admitting any impure mixture of Paganism into the Christian Faith, here urges the impossibility of making such opposite principles to coalesce, and the absurdity of attempting to engraft the one on the other. "What fellowship," saith he, "hath righteousness with unrighteousness? "and what communion hath light with dark-"ness? and what concord hath Christ with "Belial? or what part hath he that be-"lieveth with an Infidel? and what agree-"ment hath the temple of God with Idols?"

It is impossible to place the incompatibility of pure religion with an idolatrous Worship in a stronger point of view; and

had Christians been always attentive to this important consideration; had they always been sufficiently aware of the injury which is done to the Gospel, when it is suffered to be contaminated by principles originating with the Father of error and delusion; the world had never seen it under so debased a form, as that which it assumed during the Middle Ages.

Such, however, has been the influence of the Evil Spirit upon the perverseness or the inconsideration of mankind, that, from the earliest times, a propensity has shewn itself to intermix human inventions with Divine ordinances, and to admit falsehood and corruption into an association with purity and truth. Hence, the progress which the enemy of the Faith made in the Christian Church became, in process of time, so extensive as to endanger the very existence of Christianity; and the light of the Gospel must have been nearly extinguished, had not God still preserved a remnant of his faithful servants "who bowed not the knee to Baal;" and raised up, from time to time, instruments of his power and goodness, to bear witness to the Truth and to prepare mankind for their rescue, in due season, from this miserable bondage.

The Protestant Reformation has been generally considered, by the wisest and best of men, as the especial work of Providence to effect this blessed purpose. But though it was an event by which "a great door and "effectual was opened[c]" for spreading the knowledge of true Religion, yet there were "many adversaries" who exerted themselves to defeat its object; so many, indeed, that the Reformers might justly say, (as the Apostle had said before them,) "we wrestle "not against flesh and blood, but against "principalities, against powers, against the "rulers of the darkness of this world, against "spiritual wickedness in high places[d]."

The efforts of these formidable adversaries we are now to investigate.

The miserable corruptions of Christianity under the Papal usurpation, and the advantage taken of them by opponents of every description, have been already noticed. The few whose zeal for pure Religion led them to seek a remedy for these evils, could not but perceive the almost innumerable obstacles presented to their view. Obloquy and persecution threatened them on every side. Those who adhered to the Papal system from motives of worldly interest were many

[c] 1 Cor. xvi. 9. [d] Ephes. vi. 12.

and powerful. Of those who were willing to resist its encroachments, not a few were hostile to Christianity itself. From persons of this description no cordial cooperation could be expected in any plan for the revival of pure Christianity, however ready they might be to join in the overthrow of its ambitious rulers. These obstacles must have been too evident to escape the observation of the first Reformers; and hence arises a strong presumptive proof of their sincerity, in venturing to encounter such dangers for the Gospel's sake.

Doubts, however, have been frequently insinuated respecting the purity of their motives; and in a contest where passion and prejudice had on both sides much room to operate, it is hardly to be expected that the portraits of the principal actors in the scene should be transmitted to us without some extravagant colouring. By Romish advocates we cannot wonder to find them depicted in the most disadvantageous manner; while from Protestants we may sometimes apprehend a concealment of their indiscretions or misconduct. But it is most remarkable, that Infidel writers seem to take peculiar pleasure in reviling their characters and depreciating the value of their exertions.

This may, perhaps, be accounted for, if we consider the nature of the contest between Christians and Unbelievers. When men are desirous of overthrowing Christianity, the more they are enabled to represent it as abounding with absurdities and superstitions, the greater is the probability of their bringing it into discredit. But, without such an advantage, it is scarcely in the power of Infidels to hold it up as an object of contempt. This seems to be the most probable cause that can be assigned of the rancorous treatment which the Protestant Reformation has experienced from Deistical Writers. From this circumstance, therefore, we may form some estimate of its real importance to the support of Christianity itself; since our adversaries, who are ever intent upon the destruction of Christianity, are generally more quicksighted in discerning what is really favourable or inimical to the success of their plans, than those who are "at ease in Zion," or indifferent as to what concerns its safety.

But it is by no means necessary for the vindication of the Protestant cause, (much less for our present view of the subject,) to prove that the Reformers, though eminently distinguished by their virtues as well as their talents, were exempt from human failings.

They pretended neither to absolute perfection, nor to preternatural powers: neither did they assert any Divine commission of an extraordinary kind, for the great work which they had taken in hand. They honestly and conscientiously urged their obligation to obey God rather than man, when their compliance with the arbitrary injunctions of the latter became incompatible with their clear and acknowledged duty to the former. They did not presumptuously oppose themselves to human authority. On the contrary, they regarded it with reverence, and submitted to it, whenever that could be done without endangering their salvation; and where it could not, they unaffectedly deplored the necessity of disobedience, and earnestly deprecated any measures which might tend to destroy the Unity of the Church. Such, at least, was the conduct of the principal Reformers in the *outset* of their important work; however some of them might *in after times* depart from those principles of moderation and of respect for Authority, Civil and Ecclesiastical.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that too much of human passion and infirmity was sometimes blended with these upright and laudable motives: of which the occa-

sional violence of some chief leaders of the Reformation affords but too clear a proof. This we may readily allow, nor fear any advantage which may be taken of the concession; since it only proves, that the best of men, acting in the best of causes, are still *human:* and that in the most signal triumphs of God's faithful servants, there is ever so much weakness and imperfection discernible on their parts, as to shew "that "not unto *them*, but unto *his* name," must be given the praise and the glory of their success.

But candour requires that we should separate the views and principles of the Reformers themselves, from those of many who cooperated with them through motives of interest and ambition. Many Potentates in Europe undoubtedly engaged in an opposition to the Papal power, from considerations of State policy rather than of Religion. Nor can we wonder at this, when we reflect upon the inordinate ambition with which the Roman Pontiffs had grasped at secular power, and the gigantic strides which they had made towards universal dominion. It rather ought to excite our admiration of that omniscient wisdom which can make even the worst passions of our nature subserve his

purpose, by bringing good out of evil. For, hence a host of foes were collected against the Romish Usurpation, who regarded the Popes with jealousy and hatred as their competitors for earthly Supremacy. But however these might contribute towards the success of the Reformation, it were highly unjust to confound with such abettors of its cause the excellent and illustrious characters by whose labours it was more immediately effected.

It is evident, then, that we cannot form a just idea of this great change in the aspect of Religion, without regarding it as the work of an overruling Providence. Never, perhaps, (except in the great triumph of Christianity over Paganism) was the Divine interposition more conspicuous than in the success of the Protestant Reformation. When we consider also that this great event appears to have been by no means the result of any preconcerted plan; but to have arisen, as it were, casually out of the circumstances which presented themselves; one event leading to another, and one successful investigation preparing the way for further discoveries of truth; we are forcibly struck with the evidence thus afforded of its being upholden by more than human power.

But, not to enlarge unnecessarily upon the

many topics which might be urged in vindication of the general conduct of the Reformers, or in proof of the Divine blessing upon their exertions; let us now proceed to consider the efforts of the Adversary to obstruct their laudable designs, and his subtlety in afterwards endeavouring to pervert the *good* which they had effected into an instrument of perhaps greater evil than that from which they had escaped.

That we may form an adequate conception of the difficulties with which the Protestant Reformers had to contend, it is necessary to go back to an early period. For, though we are accustomed to speak of the Reformation as the work of the fifteenth and sixteenth Centuries, yet its rise may be traced many ages before. The Waldenses and the Albigenses distinguished themselves upwards of three hundred years before the preaching of Luther, by their opposition to the errors of the Church of Rome. Nay, in times much more remote there were not wanting, in the northern provinces of Italy and the southern provinces of Gaul, sound and orthodox Churches which resolutely withstood every attempt of the Church of Rome to introduce Heathenism and idolatrous practices, ("doc-" trines of Devils," as St. Paul emphatically calls

them,) and to engraft them upon the Christian Faith. Notwithstanding, therefore, the indefatigable labours of the most eminent advocates of the Romish Church, they have completely failed in endeavouring to derive the origin of these Reformers from those odious and heretical Sects who in early times distracted the Church by their divisions. On the contrary, they may rather be regarded as the venerable remains of pure and legitimate Provincial Churches, which flourished in Italy and Gaul from the earliest promulgation of the Gospel in those countries, and which were of far more ancient date than the Papal usurpation. These Churches distinguished themselves by their continual protestations against Image-worship, their tenacious adherence to the Holy Scriptures, and their refusal to adopt the corrupt innovations of the Church of Rome. Even in the tenth and eleventh Centuries, (those times of general darkness and superstition,) the little light which broke in upon the Western Church seems to have issued from this auspicious source.

It is, therefore, great injustice to confound the Albigenses and Waldenses with Schismatics and Heretics; as if they perversely adopted heterodox opinions, and maintained

them against the lawful authority of the Church. Neither is it doing them full justice, to regard them merely as bodies of *individuals* separating from the Romish Church, because they could not conscientiously comply with its terms of communion. It is evident that they stand upon higher ground than this. They are to be vindicated, not only upon the general duty of separation from a Church which imposes *sinful* terms of Communion, (much less upon the loose principles of modern Schismatics, who hold every private congregation of Christians to be a Church in itself,) but upon the solid grounds of Church-Authority, by which every National or Provincial Church, duly governed by Bishops of Apostolical origin, hath a right (taking the Holy Scriptures for its guide) to frame its own Articles and its own Ritual, independently of other Churches. This right the Churches of Piedmont, Aquitania, and Narbonne, appear to have constantly exercised; refusing to acknowledge the claims of the Church of Rome: and those of their descendants who, after the overthrow of those Churches by Papal oppression, were dispersed and persecuted, under the denomination of Waldenses, Albigenses, and other local names, ought not, for such an adherence to the primitive

rule of the Gospel, to be branded as enemies to the doctrine or the discipline of Christ's Holy Catholic Church.

The Romish Writers, indeed, charge them, not only with Heresy and Schism, but with other errors of the most abominable kind. A careful inspection, however, of their history will convince us that these charges have arisen, for the most part, from confounding (whether intentionally, or not) these regular and orthodox Christians with Sectaries of the worst description, more especially with the Manichean heretics. By these it is, indeed, not improbable that they might *in after times* have been corrupted: but *in their origin* there is abundant proof that they were perfectly distinct from them, and totally dissimilar both in principles and practice. Such charges Papists have ever been forward to allege against all who resist their usurpations; and these charges are now also become, on the part of modern Romanists, in some degree *necessary* in order to vindicate, or, at least, palliate, the horrible cruelties practised by their predecessors upon these wretched victims of their barbarous persecution. Many calumnies, indeed, have been cast upon them, hardly less atrocious than those which, in earlier times, were cast upon Christians in general, both by

Jews and Heathen. With even more than Pagan fury were these reputed Heretics persecuted and destroyed, for many *good* opinions *which they held*, and for many *bad* ones *which they held not*. History abounds with dreadful instances of their sufferings from Papal violence. But they continued to manifest their zeal in the cause of Reformation: and the impolitic cruelties of their adversaries eventually contributed to spread their opinions in other countries whither they were driven to seek refuge. Hence the origin of the Lollards in England, the Hussites in Germany, the Tramontanes in Italy, the Bohemians, the Lombards, the Turlupins, and many others; most of whom may be considered as having, more or less, imbibed their principles of purer doctrine from these oppressed and unfortunate exiles.

With respect to the personal characters of those individuals who distinguished themselves as leaders of the Protestant Reformation, it is not necessary for our present purpose to add much to what has already been said. Although their adversaries have spared no pains to asperse the reputation of Wickliffe, Huss, Luther, and of others who trod in their steps; we shall perhaps search in vain either in ancient or modern history for examples of

men more justly entitled to the praise of splendid talents, sound learning, and genuine piety. As to any failings in temper or discretion which appear to have sullied these excellent qualities, when we consider the perverseness with which these Reformers had to contend, and the bitter persecutions which they continually experienced, in pursuing their great and laudable purpose; we must have little of Christian charity, as well as little knowledge of human infirmity, if we be not disposed to make large allowance for the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed. It should also be remembered to their honour, that the first Reformers in general, and especially those of our own country, were not men who presumed upon the right of private judgment to dictate to their lawful superiors or to subvert lawful establishments; but who maintained the necessity of an appeal to Scripture, in order to effect an amicable decision upon disputed points of the very last importance; and that they only opposed a manifest Usurpation of authority, on the part of those who unlawfully insisted upon "having dominion over their "Faith," instead of being "helpers of their "joy."

Nothing, indeed, can be more evident,

than that the *English* Reformers, in particular, acted not *against* any lawful authority, but in complete *subordination* to it; the Reformation in this country being carried on under the direction of the Spiritual Governors of the Church, who were Bishops as truly and Apostolically constituted as any Bishops upon earth, and who, in refusing to submit to the Papal power, refused only to sacrifice their own just authority to an Usurpation as unjust in its principles as it was corrupt in its practice.

Nay, it is remarkable that even the most bigoted writers in behalf of Popery acknowledge the Protestant Reformation to have been brought on by the scandalous abuses of power which prevailed in the Romish Church; and sometimes speak of its success as a proof of the Divine judgment upon the Papal enormities. Can there be a more convincing argument than this, for its utility and necessity? Can there be a more complete vindication of those who maintained it to be their duty to "come out of" such a Church, "lest its plagues should fall upon "them?" What will it avail, then, after such an acknowledgment, to attempt, by uncharitable and unjust imputations upon the *motives* of the Reformers, to cast an odium

upon the important services which they rendered to Christianity?

It is not, however, the less pertinaciously urged by these writers, that the Reformation originated in pride, vanity, evil concupiscence, and the like; and they infer that its success is not to be wondered at, because it flattered and encouraged these corrupt propensities of the human heart. They compare its progress with that of Mahometanism; to which they pretend that it bears a strong resemblance in point of character and principle. But, not to mention that the weapons of its warfare were totally opposite to those which Mahomet employed, (the terrors of persecution and violence being generally exerted *against* the Reformation,) these charges are manifestly unfounded. They proceed upon an assumption that the ordinances of the Romish Church relative to fasting, confession, penance, celibacy, and monkish seclusion from the world, were productive of humility, self-denial, continency, and other Christian virtues; and that the unauthorized and monstrous doctrines which it forced upon the belief of mankind were conducive to true faith and a pious submission of men's reasoning faculties to the revealed will of God. Whereas, in truth, these

ordinances and these doctrines were unfortunately found to have an opposite effect: since, by imposing upon men burdens too grievous to be borne, and such as had no warrant from the Holy Scriptures, they tempted them either to rest in mere externals, or to assume an appearance of sanctity, while they secretly indulged in the grossest lusts of the flesh, as well as in the most presumptuous speculations of the understanding. That this was too generally the case, is not to be denied; although it may readily be acknowledged that even in the worst periods of this corrupt Church some splendid exceptions were to be found, in men eminent for piety of principle and purity of conduct, and who truly adorned the Christian profession. But these, alas! appear to have been of rare occurrence. From those impieties and extravagancies, however, which were almost the universal result of the corruption of the Romish Church, the more correct principles of the Reformation tended to set men free; since while it exacted, from all, true Evangelical holiness, it released them from the unnatural and unscriptural restraints which had only served as a snare and temptation to evil.

Thus much it seemed necessary to state,

with reference to the principles of the early Reformers, in order to shew the perverseness of their opponents, as well as to explain the connection which this view of the Protestant Reformation has with our main subject. For, hence it appears that upon the success of the Reformation almost depended the existence of the Gospel itself; and that its opponents, of whatever kind, contributed to serve essentially the cause of Infidelity and Antichrist. Christianity was so miserably defaced by the superstitions of the Middle Ages as scarcely to be distinguishable, in many respects, from Paganism.—Infidelity, even in the very bosom of the Church, was in several instances notorious and undisguised. Indeed, in no part of Christendom did gross Atheism prevail so much as in Italy and even in Rome itself, in the College of Cardinals and under the patronage of Popes. With this general corruption and apostasy was connected such a system of authority, both temporal and spiritual, as rendered it impracticable, while that system continued, to liberate mankind from their deplorable thraldom. The Adversary seemed to be rapidly advancing to the completion of his design; and the means employed to defeat the labours of those who

sought to restore the Gospel to its genuine purity, were truly characteristic of the Author of Evil.

Persecution, calumny, and sophistry, were the engines employed by *Papal*, as they had formerly been by *Pagan* Rome, against all who endeavoured to enlighten mankind with the pure knowledge of the Gospel. According to the strong language of the Apocalypse, Rome was "drunk with the blood of martyrs[c]." But (as in the case of the primitive Christians) when violence alone was found insufficient to crush the spirit of the Reformers, the foulest slanders were circulated to excite hatred against them; and the most disingenuous reasonings were employed, to perplex and misrepresent the clear and solid truths which they inculcated. Charges of heresy, schism, immorality, sedition, and hostility to Government both civil and ecclesiastical, were continually urged against them, though as constantly repelled by unanswerable arguments.

But that which most strikingly exhibits the enemies of the Reformation in the light of real adversaries to Christianity, is their obstinacy in withholding from the people the use of the Holy Scriptures. Among the *Pa-*

[c] Rev. xvii. 6.

gan Emperors who opposed Christianity we stigmatize, as peculiarly odious, those who endeavoured its extirpation by compelling Christians to give up their Bibles:—and we thus stigmatize them, because we justly consider this as a more diabolical and a more effective plan for its destruction than even personal violence. What shall we say, then, of a *Christian* Potentate, arrogating to himself the titles of Vicar of Christ and Head of the Universal Church upon earth, yet adopting the very policy of the bitterest enemies of the Christian Faith, to extinguish the light of the Gospel, and to reduce the whole Christian world to a state of ignorance and darkness? What expedient could be better devised, to promote the designs of Satan? —And would not this act of cruelty alone, this impious attempt to deprive men of their spiritual food and sustenance, fully justify the ardour and inflexible resolution of those, who hazarded every thing that was dear to them in this life for the recovery of those invaluable treasures?

Thus we see that the chief and most formidable enemies of the Gospel at this period were among those "of the household "of Faith," those who were its ostensible guardians, those to whom it had been com-

mitted as a sacred trust, and who were accountable both to God and Man for its general dissemination and support. With these were leagued in one bond of iniquitous union all whose views of temporal aggrandizement depended upon the aid of the Papal power, and all who were attached to it from bigotry or an intolerant spirit: to whom may be added most of the Scholastic Theologists of those times, who had so accustomed themselves to chicanery and disputation as to despise the plain and unsophisticated doctrines of Holy Writ.

It may, indeed, be not unreasonably supposed, that out of the multitude who thus combined together to resist the Reformation, there were some who opposed it, not as wilful enemies to the Truth, but rather from prejudices, in a great degree excusable, against all attempts at Reformation, in an age abounding with extravagant admirers of philosophical novelties, who seemed disposed to pursue their researches without submitting to any restraint from laws human or divine. Fearful of the consequences which might ensue, if the Reformation should eventually fall into such hands; and fearful likewise of the danger, (which at the very dawn of the Reformation became but too apparent,) that those

who were unstable would wrest the Scriptures to their destruction, it is easy to believe that even good men might shrink from the support of the Protestant cause, however convinced of its being a just and righteous cause, and might deem it expedient rather to suffer the continuance of long-rooted errors and corruptions, than to hazard even worse evils by giving the reins to licentiousness and presumption. This, however, is a plea which it is to be feared can be alleged but for few of the opponents of this great work, and, perhaps, for none of those who were most forward in endeavouring to defeat its design. These were, for the most part, such as have already been described: as the writings in controversy between them and the Protestants too plainly testify.

But, besides these numerous enemies from *within*, the Protestant Reformers had likewise to contend with the *external* and professed adversaries of the Christian Faith, to whom the struggle between Popery and Protestantism afforded but too favourable an opportunity of prosecuting their designs.

The *Jews*, whose malicious efforts during the Middle Ages have been already noticed, still continued their indefatigable labours.

The terrors of persecution (which they had hitherto so often experienced) were now in some degree abated; the storm of fury being transferred from them to the Protestants, whom the Papal power regarded as its more formidable opponents. Accordingly, fresh attacks were made on the Christian Faith, and the unhappy contests between the Reformed and the Corrupted Churches were with great subtlety applied by the Jews, to the purpose of throwing entire discredit upon the Gospel. The Reformers, however, were not unmindful of these adversaries, whom they occasionally attacked and refuted with becoming spirit: and even Luther himself, engaged as he was in an almost unintermitting controversy with the advocates of Popery, found occasion to turn the force of his vigorous talents and extensive knowledge against these inveterate foes of Truth.

Of *Mahometanism* we hear less in this than in preceding times; the *Western* Empire being not so much infested as heretofore with its barbarous disciples. Several writers, however, distinguished themselves during the fifteenth and sixteenth Centuries in combating its errors; whence it is to be inferred that occasions still continued to present them-

selves, wherein these defences of the Christian Faith against the follies and impieties of the Koran became necessary.

But more formidable assailants than either Jews or Turks were now preparing to attack the Gospel. *Philosophy* (the instrument which, of all others, the great Enemy of mankind has most frequently employed in his service, because, by gratifying men's vanity and self-importance, it most easily insinuates itself into the human mind, and therefore oftentimes prevails when grosser temptations to Unbelief prove ineffectual) became more and more the delight of inquisitive minds. There were also peculiar advantages presented at this time for extending its influence far beyond the limits, to which, since the establishment of Christianity, it had hitherto been confined.

The revival of Grecian literature had already greatly enlarged the sphere of inquiry into philosophical subjects, among those who had access to its treasures. But the invention of the Art of Printing now wonderfully facilitated the means of diffusing this as well as other knowledge. This important discovery, nearly contemporary with the Protestant Reformation, may indeed be considered as providentially taking place at this particular

juncture, for the promotion of Christian Knowledge; since it rapidly forwarded the pious work of the Reformers, by enabling them to give to the Holy Scriptures a general and almost unlimited circulation. Thus it became the main instrument of the Reformation, without which Popery had perhaps never been overthrown, and against which it could not maintain its ground. But the Spirit of subtlety and mischief failed not to discover the practicability of employing this powerful engine for his own destructive purposes; and such has been the success of evil-minded men in the use of it, that, as no human invention perhaps ever produced more important good, so none ever produced more actual evil.

While the revival of pure Religion, therefore, was greatly aided by this art on the one hand, the revival and dissemination of false Philosophy were no less indebted to it on the other; and the disquisitions of speculative men being now no longer confined to the study of the Aristotelian system, the whole circle of ancient learning lay open to their view. Charmed with the richness of the prospect, and captivated by discoveries which had all the attraction of novelty to recommend them, they revelled in the luxuriancy

of the scene, and wandered with little caution or circumspection through the deceitful labyrinths of Philosophy, culling at pleasure whatever was most adapted to their respective tastes. Hence we find, about the period of the Reformation, a revival of almost every philosophical Sect, with selections and combinations of their several tenets, no less various and discordant than those which prevailed in ancient Greece and Rome. Some busied themselves in restoring the genuine Philosophy of Aristotle, hitherto debased by impure mixtures of Oriental or Cabalistic inventions. Others revived the Platonic system and maintained its exclusive claim to truth, with a pertinacity and vehemence unbecoming the advocates of mere human speculation. The contests carried on between the students of Plato and Aristotle, and the excessive homage paid by each to their respective oracles, are scarcely to be paralleled in the history of polemics. Into these two parties the learned world was chiefly divided: though some were at the same time employed in reviving the Pythagorean, Ionic, Stoic, and Epicurean systems; while others consumed their time and talents in new-modelling these various theories and adapting them to their own devices.

It is not to be imagined that speculations

like these, unrestrained (as, in too many instances, they appear to have been) by any reverence for principles of a higher nature, could be pursued without great injury to the cause of Revealed Religion. The names of several distinguished Scholars in the very heart of the Papal dominions stand recorded as awful warnings to all who embark on the wide ocean of Philosophy, without some principle of a higher nature to direct them in their course. Upon this point, however, I forbear now to enlarge; as it will constitute the groundwork of a future inquiry into the history of modern Deism.

It only remains, in conclusion of our present subject, briefly to notice the efforts of the Adversary to convert the good which was effected by the Protestant Reformation into an instrument of greater evil than that which it proposed to remedy.

To those who duly consider the nature and constitution of the Christian *Church*, the principles on which it is founded and its importance to the very existence of the Christian *Faith*; — and to those who have that regard for *sound doctrine* which seems inseparable from a *firm belief* in the Divine origin of the Gospel;—it will appear indisputable, that every thing which militates

against the primitive authority of the Church, or against "the Faith once delivered to the "Saints," has so far a tendency to overthrow Christianity itself, or at least to render it inefficacious. That the leaders of the Protestant Reformation did not *intend* any thing subversive of the primitive Constitution of the Church is sufficiently evident, notwithstanding the repeated assertions of Papists to the contrary. The Protestants, generally speaking, resisted the Pope, not in his Episcopal character as Bishop of Rome, nor as Metropolitan or Patriarch in the province over which he might have lawfully presided; but as an unlawful *Usurper* of authority both spiritual and temporal, over provinces, nay, over kingdoms and empires, wholly *independent* of him. That he was justly chargeable with this usurpation, and therefore not entitled to their obedience, they proved from the clearest evidences of History, from the testimonies of the Fathers of the Church, and from the doctrine of Holy Writ. They opposed the corrupt tenets and practices of the *Romish* Church, not because they questioned the power of the *Catholic* Church to decree rites and ceremonies, nor its authority in matters of Faith, subject to the written word of God;

but because the Romish Church had arbitrarily imposed, both upon its own members and upon members of other Churches, articles which could not be subscribed, and services which could not be performed, without a departure from the word of God, nay, without incurring the guilt of absolute impiety and Idolatry. In short, they argued (as the Apostles did) that there could be no concord between Christ and Belial; and that they were under a *necessity* of withdrawing from the Romish Communion, or, to speak more properly, of shaking off the usurped dominion of the Pope, because submission to it was rendered incompatible with their obedience to God.

Thus far we see nothing which can fairly be construed into an attempt to overthrow the Christian Church, no infringement of its legitimate authority, no inclination to set aside the Apostolical succession of its ministers, or to slight any one article of the true *Catholic Faith*. On the contrary, many of the warmest advocates for the Reformation are well known to have manifested an unshaken attachment to Episcopacy, as of Divine ordinance, and jealously to have adhered to all the great fundamental doctrines of Salvation.

If these principles had been *universally* acted upon, vain, indeed, would have been the efforts of its bitterest enemies to fix a stain upon the Reformation. But he who is ever active to prevent evil from being remedied, or good from being carried into effect, found ready agents to promote his designs. From a resistance to oppression and usurpation, men of corrupt minds and violent tempers were easily led to "despise "governments and to speak evil of dignities," though rendered venerable by antiquity and sanctioned by Divine institution. Others, from refusing to abide by the pretended infallibility of the *Pope* in matters of Faith, were too easily carried into the opposite extreme of regarding *themselves* as infallible; presumptuously framing Creeds of their own, however unqualified for the undertaking; measuring Scripture by the standard of their own Reason; and setting up private judgment in opposition to all authority human or Divine. Hence the Christian world became again exposed to the inroads of Schism and Heresy; those two powerful coadjutors of Infidelity, from whose influence we may venture to affirm that Christianity has experienced as much injury as from the open attacks of its undisguised assailants.

The sad effects produced by this licentious abuse of the principles of the Reformation are but too well known to every reader of Ecclesiastical History. Sects of various denominations arose, distracting the Church with endless confusion. The extravagancies of ancient heretics were revived and new systems of Mysticism and Fanaticism invented, for the delusion of the multitude. The shocking atrocities of the Anabaptists, in particular, shew to what excesses of absurdity, indecency, and cruelty, men may be carried, if they let loose the passions and the imagination, and suffer them to have the sole guidance in spiritual concerns. Besides these outrageous Fanatics, there were many of a less flagrant description, who did incalculable mischief to the cause of Religion, by undervaluing its external ordinances and affecting a system of *abstracted* piety and purity unattainable by man, never meant to be attained by him, nay, repugnant to the very principles of Christianity. By these, the Sacraments and the Priesthood were made of no account; and the means of Grace which God himself had appointed for conveying to his people the assurance of pardon and sanctification, were either wholly set aside, or regarded as un-

availing forms and ceremonies. This was, indeed, a very ancient error in the Christian Church, prevailing, more or less, in various periods of its history; and at the time of the Reformation it seems to have been revived, in consequence of too vehement and indiscriminate an opposition to the whole *exterior* of Popery; in destroying which, some of the Reformers essentially injured Christianity itself, and contributed to cherish a spirit of presumption and disorganization never since entirely subdued. To the same cause may be attributed the vain and impious pretences of many enthusiasts to extraordinary inspirations of the Holy Spirit; pretences scarcely ever found to enter into men's imaginations, till they have imbibed a contempt for the instituted means of Grace, and, instead of a sober and pious use of those means, betake themselves to fantastical reveries and to delusions of the most pernicious tendency.

Neither ought we to pass by altogether without mention the baleful effects of *Socinianism*, which sprang up about the same time and spread considerably in Poland and other countries; a system, which, by depriving Christianity of most of its peculiar and essential doctrines, degrades it almost

to a level with *Deism*, and makes it equally unavailable to Salvation. It is manifest that this is one of the errors springing out of false Philosophy; or, rather, it is a system of Natural Religion, concealed under the garb of Christianity. Acknowledging the external evidences of the Gospel and the Divine mission of Jesus, it yet refuses to reverence him as our Lord and Saviour, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; and seems to regard him merely as a Preacher of Natural Religion, scarcely superior in personal dignity and excellence to the Sages of the Heathen world. Making Revelation stoop to human reason, and sacrificing its saving truths to a vain and self-sufficient Philosophy, it rather resembles those refined and specious systems by which, in the latter ages of Paganism, Sophists endeavoured to supplant and supersede the Gospel, than any system which had hitherto been presented to the world under the form of Christianity.

In all these instances, it is manifest that the severest wounds were inflicted upon Christianity, and its enemies made to triumph. This may serve, then, as an apology for entering thus far into a detail of the unhappy divisions and errors that have subsisted among Christians; into which, accord-

ing to the Institution of these Lectures, it is forbidden us further to inquire.—But, whoever considers the Protestant Reformation as, in effect, *a struggle for the Christian Religion* against some of its worst adversaries, may be disposed to admit, that our subject could not be completed without such an investigation of the good and evil which it has produced.

Indeed, it seems evident that if Popery be really an *Antichristian* system, it deserves to be treated as a species of *Apostasy* from the Faith, and to be numbered among the devices of Satan to defeat the purpose of the Gospel. That the *Reformers* viewed it in this light, is certain; and the more they examined into the prophecies relating to Antichrist, the more were they convinced that such an application of them was just. Modern Divines, who may perhaps be supposed to have investigated the subject with more dispassionate attention, have, in general, concurred in this interpretation:—and, though some very ingenious and plausible reasonings have been adduced both by Papists and Protestants to set it aside, the weight of argument, as well as of authority, still seems decidedly to preponderate in its favour.

But, even if the Scriptural character of Antichrist were intended, (as some suppose,)

rather to denote a series and succession of different adversaries to the Gospel, from the time of its promulgation to the end of the world, including every description of Infidelity and Apostasy that has arisen, or may yet arise; still Popery would be justly entitled to a *share* in that reproachful character, inasmuch as its tendency to propagate error and delusion has manifestly had the effect of promoting an absolute *apostasy* from the Faith. In many respects it bears a striking resemblance to Paganism; or, rather, it appears to be a system of Paganism engrafted upon Christianity. Its idolatry, its superstitious ritual, its saint-worship, all so nearly approaching to the spirit and practice of the ancient Mythology, bespeak it to be of similar character and origin.

When we take this view of the system of Papal corruption as a part of that "mystery " of iniquity" which has hitherto worked, and will still continue to work in some way or other to the prejudice of the Gospel; and when we reflect upon the powerful engines which were employed to perpetuate, by means of it, the bondage of the whole Christian world;—we are astonished at the magnitude of the undertaking, on the part of those who attempted the Reformation. And when, on

the other hand, we view the success of this undertaking, and reflect upon the wonderful testimony which was thereby given to some of the most remarkable Prophecies in Holy Writ, we must be more than sceptical, to resist such evidence of its being upholden by the Divine favour. Here, therefore, as in every other instance, we find that though the enemies of Truth "are mighty, and rage horribly, yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is "mightier[f]."

In this, as well as the preceding Discourse, our inquiries have chiefly been limited to the *Western* Churches. In the *East*, the enemy extended his influence far and wide by means of the destructive engine of Mahometanism, the effect of which was every where felt in the corruption or the extirpation of the Gospel. Yet it pleased God to bless with the light of Christianity several countries, where it had before been unknown or extinguished. The discovery of America presented a spacious field for its dissemination; whither, as well as into many parts of Asia and Africa, the adventurous Europeans carried with them some knowledge of its Divine and consolatory truths, however obscured by superstition and error.—Europe, however, being the channel

[f] Psalm xciii. 5.

through which these countries were supplied, has principally claimed our attention.

With respect to our future course, the scene which still lies before us, though it includes but a small space compared with what has already been gone over, will occupy no inconsiderable portion of our time and attention; not only on account of its connection with our own immediate situation and circumstances, but from the increased exertions of the Adversary to bereave mankind of the hope of Christians.

In the mean while, reflecting with deep concern upon the manifold causes which lead men to "make shipwreck of their faith," let us fervently join in that seasonable petition of our most excellent Liturgy; "From the "crafts and assaults of the Devil, from all "blindness of heart, from pride, vain-glory, "and hypocrisy, from all false doctrine, heresy, "and schism, from hardness of heart, and con- "tempt of thy word and commandment, good "Lord deliver us!"

SERMON IX.

PROVERBS xxvi. 24, 25.

He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.

THE character here given by Solomon of him who hateth his neighbour, is equally applicable to him who hateth God. Where a rancorous enmity to the Divine will hath taken root in the heart, recourse will be had to dissimulation and deceit, for the more effectual accomplishment of those designs, which perverse malignity never fails to generate. Woe to them, therefore, who give ear to the smooth and plausible arguments by which the doctrines of the *Infidel* are usually insinuated into unwary minds. "When he "speaketh fair, believe him not; for there are "seven abominations in his heart;"—his pretensions to a love of Truth, or to a regard for mankind, too often serve only to conceal the

most dangerous principles, inimical both to God and Man.

We are now entering upon that period of the History of Infidelity in which we shall find continual evidence of the truth of this remark.

The great Enemy of the Faith having, as it should seem, exhausted his artillery in open attacks upon the truth of the Gospel, found it expedient to have recourse to stratagem and subtlety. The Gospel had withstood the violence of Pagans, the treachery of Jews, and the audacity of Mahomet. It had equally maintained its ground against the inroads of Atheistical Philosophy. But there was yet another attempt to be made, that of assailing it under the mask of *pure Religion*, with professions of attachment to its interests, but with a secret desire of compassing its destruction.

The origin and progress of this new scheme we are now to unfold; and to shew, that, notwithstanding its specious appearance, it was employed in undermining the very foundations of Christianity.

The injury which Religion had suffered from the Scholastic Philosophy was not easily to be repaired: nor was it, we shall find, exposed to much less danger from the revival

of a purer Philosophy. It might, indeed, be supposed that, having arrived to a greater precision in philosophical arrangements, having enriched Science with many valuable acquisitions, and having had opportunities of comparing, combining, and digesting the various theories of past ages, men of research would now find the attainment of Truth in general, and of *religious* Truth in particular, greatly facilitated. And certainly, it were ungrateful to deny, that from the ample stores of learning and information of every kind, obtained by the revival of letters, much benefit was derived to the cause of Religious Truth. A variety of new proofs, arguments, and illustrations, in favour of Revealed Religion were brought forward; and its Advocates were provided with fresh weapons for its defence, or were taught to wield the old ones with a dexterity and force superior to what had been known in preceding ages. But this very circumstance tended, unfortunately, to inflate the minds of those who availed themselves of it, and to generate that pride of intellect which too often leads men to attribute to the powers of their own understandings advantages merely incidental and adventitious.

Seldom has this propensity been more dis-

cernible than in the restorers of ancient learning during the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries. Instead of keeping Philosophy subordinate to Religion, they not unfrequently reversed this order, and made the latter subservient to the former. Some exerted themselves with astonishing zeal and perseverance to bring the Philosophy of their immediate predecessors into disrepute, and exposed its absurdities with unsparing freedom. Others retained so great a tenderness, and even veneration, for the Aristotelian system, as reluctantly to unveil its deformities and hold it up to censure. But among *all* who were thus engaged in the reformation of Philosophy, it is but too evident that in proportion as they found their talents successfully exerted in exploding *ancient* systems, they began to speculate with the greater confidence on the formation of *new* ones; and were encouraged to give the same unbounded scope to their inquiries even in matters of *Religion;* as if the light which had enabled them to discern some gross and palpable mistakes on philosophical subjects, must necessarily be sufficient to guide them into *all* truth, however remote from human view or inaccessible to human faculties. But the event proved that they had too fondly relied upon their own

sufficiency; and that, however quicksighted they might be in detecting the fallacies of former systems, it was not equally easy to frame others of a solid and unexceptionable kind.—Much less was it practicable to improve upon Revealed Religion by an application of any of these boasted discoveries in human science to its sacred truths.

To such a height, however, was this spirit of philosophizing carried, that in many instances reverence for the Scriptures seemed to be wholly lost: while among those who waged not *open* war with Religion some, with strange inconsistency, called themselves Christians, and even contended for the necessity of Faith in the doctrines of the Gospel, while they acknowledged that faith to be altogether at variance with the philosophical opinions which they espoused.

It might be imagined that such palpable inconsistency could hardly escape detection; and that when detected it would meet with deserved reprobation. But so long had the world been perplexed by Sophistry; so successful had been the Schoolmen in confounding the distinctions between truth and falsehood by their unintelligible subtleties; and so daring had been the attacks upon the Christian Faith by some of its appointed guard-

ians; that too many were unhappily *prepared* to embrace the delusions which were offered to their acceptance. Corrupt Philosophy had deeply tainted the hearts of men; and while the great contention was, what ancient system was most worthy of being revived, or what new systems were fittest to be received, Revealed Religion was by the greater number of these Disputants neglected, perverted, or despised.

But, notwithstanding the pernicious influence of this too prevailing spirit, such appears to have been the generally increased veneration for Christianity since its Reformation from Papal Corruptions, that any attempts on the part of Unbelievers to bereave men of their hope would probably have aroused a spirit of indignation and abhorrence; had not these subtle Deceivers of mankind had recourse to plans less manifestly hostile than those which had hitherto been pursued. Hence seems to have arisen that modern species of Infidelity called *Deism*, or *Natural* Religion, as contradistinguished from *Revealed*. The exact period of its introduction it is not easy to ascertain. It appears to have first issued forth from Italy and France about the middle of the sixteenth Century, and to have found its

way into this Country early in the seventeenth. Its *denomination* was probably assumed as being less offensive to a Christian ear than any title which should at once proclaim its opposition to Revealed Religion. *This*, indeed, is the point which it is most material to our present purpose to observe; because in this consists its appropriate character, that of *concealing* its real purport under a specious and plausible disguise; professing great reverence for Religion, whilst it aims at it a most malignant and deadly blow.

The first who in this country distinguished himself as the promulgator of this new system, was the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury; who, with abundant protestations of good will and respect for Christianity, laboured indefatigably to overthrow its fundamental principles. Of this a cursory examination of his tenets will afford sufficient proof.

This Author boasts of having discovered certain primary Articles of Religion, containing every thing requisite to be believed, and superseding the necessity of Divine Revelation. The existence of God; the worship that is due to him; the necessity of piety and virtue; the expiation of offences

by repentance; and the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments; these constitute, according to his scheme, the *whole* of Religion, and are discoverable by the Light of Nature, without any communication of the Divine will. He pretends that in establishing this system he does not overturn Christianity, but strengthens and confirms it: and he is not wanting in professions of respect for the Gospel, because, as he assures us, it coincides as to these fundamental points with his own opinions. Nevertheless, his contempt and even hatred of the Gospel is in many instances apparent; and if (as the Apostle intimates) they who are "*without Christ*," are to be considered as "*without God* in the world[f]," it will not be easy to acquit this specious reasoner of the charge of Atheism itself.

Among the tenets which he advances to bring Christianity into discredit, is the maxim that *universal consent is a necessary criterion of Truth;* so that nothing is to be admitted as an essential or certain article of belief, which is not thus attested; a maxim, according to which, no one doctrine of the Christian Faith could be maintained; since, from the first promulgation of the Gospel to

[f] Ephes. ii. 12.

the present hour, numerous opponents have been found, to call in question every position, every doctrine, nay, almost every fact, which it contains. This, therefore, must be considered as an intentional, though indirect, attack upon its credibility.

It is another postulatum in this Author's system, that nothing can properly be admitted as true, which is not discoverable by our *natural* faculties, that is, by reasoning from what the light of Nature sets before us:—a position which sets aside all Revelation as useless, and renders almost every Article of the Christian faith incredible, because *not* discoverable by such a mode of investigation. —He protests, indeed, against any denial of the *possibility* of such a Revelation being true; but he contends, at the same time, against the *certainty* of its being so, except to the person to whom it is *immediately* given; and he labours to prove that all Belief which rests upon *historical* testimony must be doubtful: nay, he insists, that supposing any Revelation to be true, it is true only as to *the person to whom it is revealed*, and that others to whom it has not been so communicated are under no obligation to believe it. From all which reasoning the inference is unavoidable, that none but Pro-

phets, Apostles, or those who are actually inspired, can rationally believe any thing which God has been pleased to reveal. Insinuations are moreover interspersed, that even inspired persons ought not to place any confidence in the Divine communications which are made to them, unless the truths so revealed be such as they might have discovered without any such Revelation.

These are among the *general* positions levelled by this Author against the Christian Faith: besides which, many particular considerations are urged, and detailed at great length, with a manifest design to cast suspicion and contempt upon the Sacred Writings; which, indeed, he scruples not occasionally to allude to as deserving of no higher estimation than the Talmud, the Koran, or the Sibylline Oracles.

Thus does this vain boaster endeavour to undermine Christianity, and to erect his favourite system of *Natural Religion* upon its ruins. Yet it is observable that with all his labour and ingenuity, he is evidently at a loss for a solid *foundation* whereon to rest his theory. Whether his own articles of Belief be really as incontestable as he would represent them to be, or whether they be sufficient for the attainment of Salvation,

he hardly dares determine. His darling Idol, Natural Religion, fails him in his utmost need: and too clearly is it seen that he is intent rather upon the destruction of Revelation, than upon establishing in its stead any system on which he himself can confidently rely.

It is also apparent that, in his *mode* of assailing Christianity, he is much indebted to its Pagan opponents of old times. The trite and often refuted objections, that Christianity was a mere *innovation* upon the ancient and true Religion; that whatever it had of truth or utility was derived from the schools of Philosophy, of which it exhibited only a mutilated and imperfect transcript: that its mysteries were mere human inventions; that it was slowly and with difficulty received, for several ages after its promulgation; that the first Christians were obstinate, enthusiastic, and irrational; that the doctrines of Justification, Redemption, and Grace, are absurd and pernicious;—these and many other calumnies are revived from its Heathen adversaries, together with numberless attempts to disprove the accomplishment of the Scripture Prophecies, and to asperse the characters of the Prophets, the Apostles, and our Blessed Saviour himself: in all which but little claim can

be laid to ingenuity or novelty. The same observations apply to his efforts to invalidate the testimony of the Scripture Miracles, by insidious comparisons of them with *false* Miracles, and by endeavours to shew that Miracles of any kind do not sufficiently prove the truth of the Doctrines which they are wrought to establish.

From all this it is abundantly clear that this Author's protestations of attachment to the Gospel are wholly insincere, and that he acts, throughout, the Hypocrite and Dissembler;—a charge which it will be impossible for his admirers to repel, so long as his writings attest that while he panegyrizes Christianity, on the one hand, as a summary of religious perfection, he, on the other hand, omits no censures, no calumnies, no sophistry, no insinuations, which its avowed enemies have at any time urged against it; nor has he spared any pains to give them their full effect.

The writings of this insidious Philosophist were succeeded by those of *Hobbes*. With the same views as his fellow-labourer, he pursued a very different plan, equally mischievous, though, perhaps, not equally plausible. The former preserved an appearance of respect for prepossessions favourable to

Religion, and insinuated his poison with subtlety and caution. The latter struck openly at the root of all religious principle; affirming, that there is *no* obligation upon the consciences of men with respect to matters of *faith*; that our duty to God is a mere chimera; and that obedience to *Man* is the sole rule of belief and of practice. It appears to have been the design of this Writer, (however absurd and impious the attempt,) to circumscribe the power and will of God within the limits of the power and will of Man. For, if belief in Revealed Religion be required only on a principle of obedience to the Civil Magistrate, the will of the Divine Legislator is in effect made subservient to that of the earthly Lawgiver: and the question, "whether it be right in the sight of God to "hearken unto men more than unto God[s]," is determined in favour of *human* authority. Now, that this system is directly subversive of the very first principles of Religion, must be immediately perceived: and it is an additional proof of the Author's *intention* to produce this effect, that he fails not to urge whatever may tend to shake men's belief in Divine Revelation, or lead them to regard its strongest evidences, whether of miracles, pro-

[s] Acts iv. 19.

phecy, or inspiration, as impositions on the credulity of mankind, and as absurdities incapable of rational proof. That real Atheism was in this instance concealed under a very thin veil of Deism, is also abundantly evident.

It deserves, however, to be remarked, that as in the system of Herbert, so in that of Hobbes, we may discern much that seems to be derived from the principles of *Pagan* Philosophers. The former resembles their *esoteric* doctrine; the latter, their *exoteric*. The former builds his fabric of Religion upon private opinion and human judgment; the latter, upon public authority and the arbitrary commands of the State;—*both*, equally reject the authority of God, and would, as it were, dethrone him from his sovereignty over his creatures. They appear, however, to infinitely greater disadvantage, as perverse enemies to Christianity, than the Heathens did. When the Heathens grounded Religion on the sole authority of the *State*, they acted consistently at least, nay, "wisely in their "generation." For, since it was impossible for them to produce any testimonials of the *Divine* origin of Paganism; on what more solid basis could they found their systems, than that of human Authority?—To the

thinking few, opinion and speculation were to supply the place of Faith: and to them accordingly the esoteric philosophy was addressed. But, to the multitude, the mixed mass of the community, *authority* of some kind was necessary; and this authority (for want of a higher and better, in their state of ignorance and darkness) was made to emanate from the will of the Magistrate. But the revival of such principles in a *Christian* country could be construed into nothing less than an insinuation that the Christian Religion was an *imposture;* that God had not yet revealed himself to man; and that the whole world was still lying in darkness.

We know, indeed, in what manner the Christians of old time replied to their Adversaries, when assailed with such arguments as these, and when reviled as rebels to the State because they conformed not to its idolatrous worship. They plainly shewed that these were the last desperate efforts of people vainly "fighting against God," and endeavouring to shelter their own disgrace under the sanction of the Civil power. But with what possible motives could such arguments and such accusations be resorted to by Philosophers of modern times, living in Christian countries? None can be imagined but the malignant

desire of insinuating that Christianity had no foundation but in the authority of the State; that it originally forced itself on the world by rebellion and disobedience to lawful power; and that it might justly be deprived of its present influence and ascendancy, whenever the current of public opinion should turn against it, or the power of the Magistrate cease to be exerted in its support? Nor can we doubt, when we farther take into consideration the evident contempt of the Gospel and the studied disregard of the Holy Scriptures betrayed by these Writers, that it was their real *purpose* to vilify the primitive Christians and, through them, all their successors in the Faith, as men altogether unworthy of countenance or respect.

While these two distinguished leaders endeavoured in this country to make proselytes to the cause of Impiety; another of still greater renown appeared on the Continent, and spread the mischief far and wide. The apostate Jew, *Spinosa*, with extraordinary endowments of mind and most persevering industry, laboured to subvert the foundations of the Gospel. He, like the others, makes an ostentatious profession of his desire to promote Religion and Virtue, and occasionally affects some degree of veneration for the Holy Scriptures.

But the evident design of his works is to deny the Creator of the Universe, and to treat the whole of the Christian creed as fiction and absurdity.

His system appears to be, for the most part, compounded of the two former; but carried to greater extremes and maintained with greater audacity. *Prophecy* he regards as merely the effusions of melancholy or fanatical men, varying in its character according to the peculiar temperaments and dispositions of the persons whose imaginations are thus affected. He insists that no doctrines delivered by such persons ought to be received as of Divine inspiration, or regarded with the least degree of reverence, either as articles of belief or rules of practice. The whole of the Sacred Canon being, according to these maxims, excluded from having any claims to be considered as the *word of God*, we may the less wonder at the blasphemies which the Author has uttered against it in various parts of his writings; charging it with falsehoods, fables, inconsistencies, and contradictions; and endeavouring to shew, that it abounds with so many errors and adulterations that it cannot be considered even as the genuine production of the Authors whose names it bears.—Having thus shaken the authority of Holy Writ, he is will-

ing, nevertheless, to permit men to have recourse to it for religious instruction; provided they hold it in no veneration as the word of God, and agree to interpret it each man for himself, according to his own preconceived and natural notions of Religion, or, rather, according to the tenets of this sage Interpreter himself, who is careful to admit into his creed nothing that is reconcilable with any of the distinguishing doctrines of Revelation.

But the impiety of this Writer proceeds to greater lengths than these; even to a virtual denial of the Being of God, whom (though he sometimes may speak of him as *personally* existent) he systematically confounds with *the material Universe*, and ascribes to him no agency but that of an involuntary or physical energy; making all things to be derived from him, not as of his own good will and pleasure or as the *Creator* of the world, but by *necessary* emanation from him as the passive fountain of existence. He inveighs against those who deem it necessary to acknowledge any *Creation* of the world, in the proper sense of the word Creation. As the natural consequence of these Pantheistic, or rather, Atheistic principles, he denies a Providence; scoffs at the doctrine of Heaven, of Hell, and of Evil

Spirits; represents all Divine worship as nugatory; and ridicules as vain superstition the expectation of rewards or punishments in a future state.

His opinions, however, he undertakes to vindicate as by no means hostile to Religion or Virtue, nor even irreconcilable with Christianity. He pretends to consider the *love of God* as the chief duty and the chief good of man; although he inculcates no other notion of God than that of the material Universe; which is, in effect, (as has been justly observed,) to resolve the love of God into a love of this present world. With equal consistency he represents virtue and even repentance as necessary to Salvation; when it is evident that upon *his* theory there can be no inducement to virtue, no need of repentance, nor any possibility of Salvation, in the true acceptation of the terms: since he acknowledges not the essential distinction between virtue and vice, destroys every moral, if not physical attribute of the Deity, and by inculcating the dreary expectation of non-existence in a future state makes Salvation an empty name.

Similar observations might be made upon his manner of urging the great duties of *justice* and *charity;* which, as well as every

other moral duty, he maintains (with his predecessor Hobbes) to be only binding when enjoined by *the Civil Power*, and to depend upon no higher authority. In no instance, indeed, does he appear to attach any weight or importance to the Christian Revelation, except when he can perversely wrest any part of it to a seeming confirmation of his own system; expressly declaring his general disbelief of its principal facts as well as of its doctrines, and reviving every cavil of Celsus and other ancient Adversaries of the Faith, respecting our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, and the credibility of the testimony delivered by the Apostles.

It were disgusting as well as superfluous to pursue any farther the misrepresentations, sophisms, and perverse "contradictions," of this subtle yet bold impugner of Truth; who after all has scarcely advanced any opinions, which were not maintained by some of his precursors in the cause of Infidelity; and whose abilities are chiefly displayed in combining their scattered tenets and forming them into a more coherent system. Nevertheless, with all this hostility to our holy Religion, he so successfully played the dissembler in his outward conduct and conversation as to be thought not unfriendly to

its interests; and wore the mask of respect and veneration for it, while he was exerting the whole force of his talents to effect its overthrow.

The principal tenets of these *three great Impostors* (as they have justly been called) have been thus detailed, that we may be the better enabled to form a general comprehensive notion of modern Deism; since it appears that subsequent writers of the same stamp have, for the most part, built upon *their* foundations; some ranging themselves under one leader, some under another; while the rest selected from each what was most congenial to their respective tastes and inclinations. Whoever, therefore, is acquainted with these three, will know almost every thing that has since been advanced on the subject; with the exception of some fanciful opinions, hazarded by men of still more eccentric minds, whose labours remain yet to be noticed.

But the observation most particularly intended to be enforced, respecting those of whom we have now been treating, is, that they were deep and designing *Hypocrites*, covering their dark intentions under a show of profound reasoning, of virtue, and even of piety; and so successfully acting their

parts as to deceive many well-disposed persons; who though they reprobated most of their tenets, could not be persuaded to regard the Authors of them as wilful and intentional Adversaries of Revealed Religion. When their systems, however, are fairly laid open, nothing is more evident than their determined purpose of mocking at the Christian hope of Salvation. They "hated" the Gospel; but they "dissembled with their "lips, and laid up deceit within them." They "spake fair," when they saw occasion for so doing; but they were "not to be "believed," for "there were seven abomina- "tions in their heart." It seemed to be of importance, therefore, to expose their real views and to shew them in their proper colours; remembering what Solomon hath added to the words, of the Text, by way of warning to the Dissembler; "whose hatred "is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall "be shewed before the whole congregation."

But besides these three great Deceivers, of the seventeenth Century, there were others of considerable note about the same time who propagated the most pernicious errors, and whose labours were attended with but too much success. Among these, Vanini, the celebrated Atheist of France,

afforded a shocking instance of perverseness and depravity, if not of madness. Italy produced others of equal if not greater malignity. Other countries also were fertile in these mischievous spirits; so that in almost every part of civilized Europe Christianity had to contend with some such opponents. From all these we learn the dangerous tendency of Philosophy, when it is pursued by men of vain and ambitious minds, who scorn to restrain themselves within the just limits of the human understanding, or to submit to the controul of religious principles.

While these evils of a more glaring kind were produced by the licentious spirit which prevailed, Christianity suffered additional injury from the new Sect of *Sceptics*, who made their appearance in the seventeenth Century, and whose followers have since greatly contributed to the increase of irreligion and impiety.

This Sect carrying in its very denomination a semblance of modesty and diffidence, appears to have been joined by some who embraced its principles rather from a deep sense of the insufficiency of human knowledge for the attainment of religious Truth, than from irreverence towards Divine Revelation. These seem to have intended

to humble the arrogance of Philosophers of every sect; and, by depreciating human Reason to the very lowest degree, to lead men to an implicit Faith in Revealed Religion, or rather in the authority of the *Romish Church*, (since most of these its advocates were members of that Communion,) as the only refuge from the uncertainty of human speculations.

But the general intention of those who espoused these new principles was evidently to insinuate the insufficiency of Revelation as well as of Reason, and to excite a prejudice against Christianity by representing the uncertainty of its doctrines and its evidences. Their attacks were directed against Philosophy, chiefly with a view to destroy all distinctions between Truth and Falsehood, and, by annihilating the very first principles of knowledge, to shake the foundations of Faith as well as of human Science. In the hands of such men, Scepticism became equally destructive to Religion as to sound Philosophy. It was made to consist in the disbelief or doubt of Truth of *every* kind, natural or revealed: and *he* only was held to be enlightened or scientific, who believed nothing, and ridiculed all pretensions to certain knowledge. The injury thus done to

Christianity has been incalculably great. From such principles it was readily inferred that *all* Religion is mere Priestcraft and Imposture, designed to deceive men and to keep them in slavish bondage and irrational Superstition. When once it became a received opinion, not only that Reason and Faith were irreconcilably at variance, but that no truth was with certainty to be deduced either from the one or the other, men were left to the guidance of a blind or perverted *Imagination*, with liberty to think and to do, "every "one, what was right in his own eyes."

Philosophy, however, is not chargeable with being the *sole* cause either of Deism or of Scepticism;—in which it cannot be denied that the corruptions of Religion had a considerable share; since, in proportion as these have at any time prevailed, Infidelity has uniformly gained ground. The Romish Church cannot but be considered as having greatly strengthened the hands of all the enemies to Revealed Religion, by insisting upon the necessity of a blind and implicit Faith in the authority of the Church, independently of any rational inquiry into the grounds of such Faith, or even any reference to the Scriptures themselves. Accordingly it appears that in the fifteenth and sixteenth

Centuries, no countries abounded so much with false Philosophy and Atheism as Italy, the seat of Papal dominion. From hence, as from a centre of blasphemy, issued forth the most pestilential opinions, destructive of the very first principles of Religion. And again, when the Reformation, which had in a great measure corrected these evils, became itself a source of error and corruption, (as it unhappily did, when it fell into the hands of Schismatics and Heretics,) these new systems of Infidelity gained a footing in *Protestant* countries also. The growth of Deism in our own country under the usurpation of Cromwell, affords a proof that religious Fanaticism and contempt of lawful authority may promote the increase of Infidelity, no less than Tyranny and Superstition; and the boldness of Infidels throughout Europe at that period is the best illustration that can be given of the advantage which the deep and designing adversaries of the Faith never fail to take of any departure from its pure and genuine principles.

Neither should it be overlooked, that in scarcely any age of the Church was *religious controversy* carried to a greater height than in the seventeenth Century; and that the numberless schisms and contentions occasioned by

this polemical spirit, (and especially by the Fanatics who, in this country, succeeded in subverting the Government both in Church and State,) tended to bring Christianity itself into disrepute among the lukewarm and inconsiderate, and afforded Infidels a favourable opportunity of representing its principles as altogether precarious and ill-founded. To this we may reasonably ascribe a great portion of that Infidelity which prevailed in this country after the Restoration; when men, disgusted and shocked at the atrocities which had been committed under the mask of Religion, were but too readily persuaded to despise Religion itself, and to discard all reverence for piety as the cant of hypocrisy and rebellion.

But God, who in his gracious goodness "is "ever mindful of his Covenant" and of his promise to abide with his Church "even to "the end of the world," was pleased, in the midst of all the danger and perplexity to which the Gospel was thus exposed, to raise up men of extraordinary talents and acquirements; whose labours were directed as strenuously to the attainment of Truth, as those of others had been to the dissemination of Error The illustrious names of Bacon, Boyle,

and Newton, will ever stand recorded in our annals, not only as foremost in the ranks of Science, but (what is much more to their praise) as zealous defenders of Revealed Religion. Many others in the course of this century threw new light upon Philosophy in general, and greatly improved its principles as well as corrected its irregularities, by rendering it subservient to Religious Truth. Many also were the Champions in foreign countries who stepped forth with ardour and alacrity, applying the greatest intellectual powers and the most profound and extensive learning to the defence of the Gospel. These live, and ever will live, in the hearts of the faithful and truly wise; who will not cease to be thankful to Providence for such testimonies of his watchful superintendence over "the household of Faith."

Nor should it be forgotten that while this conflict was carrying on in the more civilized parts of the world, great exertions were made to convey the glad tidings of the Gospel into distant countries, where it had hitherto been unknown, or long disregarded. The vast and indefatigable labours of the Church of Rome, and the zealous efforts of several Protestant nations, (among whom our own is eminently

conspicuous,) in this laudable undertaking, form an epoch in Ecclesiastical History honourable to the spirit and feelings of the Christian world. The success of those efforts is an object of pleasing contemplation; and gives an earnest of the Divine blessing upon those, who, with a due regard to the *means* that are employed, endeavour to spread the knowledge of the Truth. Thus while the Prince of Darkness was gaining proselytes even in the very heart of Christendom, his kingdom was suffering daily diminution in those regions where he had hitherto been most uniformly triumphant; so as to afford fresh proofs of his comparative impotency, and a fresh earnest of the perpetuity of Messiah's kingdom.

But, let us learn from what has now been principally the subject of our inquiry, to be ever vigilant, nay, suspicious, of the designs of our spiritual enemies; who are *then* oftentimes most to be dreaded, when their attitude appears to be the least menacing. And since, after such proofs as have been brought of the subtlety of the Evil Spirit, we can neither be "ignorant of his devices," nor regardless of his power, let us "put on the whole armour of "God;" let us "stand, having our loins girt

" about with truth, and having on the breast-
" plate of righteousness; and our feet shod
" with the preparation of the Gospel of peace;
" above all, taking the shield of *Faith*, where-
" with we shall be able to quench *all* the
" fiery darts of the wicked[h]."

[h] Ephes. vi. 14, 15, 16.

SERMON X.

2 Timothy iii. 13.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

That a gradual increase of wickedness and impiety should take place in the Christian world, and that there should be continual defections from the Faith, notwithstanding all the opportunities which God's good providence would afford men for their advancement in religious knowledge, appears to have been predicted by the Sacred Writers, in such terms as leave us little reason to hope for any material amendment in the general state of mankind, previous to the close of the Gospel Dispensation. For, although there are many intimations in Holy Writ respecting the *universality* of the Gospel and its widely-extensive benefits, yet our Lord and his Apostles frequently forewarn us of the fatal influence of deceivers in seducing men from the Truth. They foretell that the time should come when men would not "en-

"dure sound doctrine;" and they prepare Christians to expect, in succeeding ages, a still more formidable opposition to the gracious system of man's Redemption.

Such being the declarations of Scripture, we are instructed to look for the accomplishment of those splendid predictions which relate to the success of the Gospel, rather in the rapid and miraculous propagation of it in the first ages, or in its beneficial effects upon mankind wherever it has been actually embraced, than in the probability of an universal acknowledgment of its truths, or in any entire victory over its enemies, so long as the present state of the world continues.—We must be careful, therefore, not to apply to the Church-Militant, promises which are, perhaps, only intended to receive their *final* completion in the Church-Triumphant. Nay, we are precluded from forming any ill-founded expectations on this head, by those remarkable words of our Blessed Saviour; "when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find "Faith upon the earth?"—implying a *decrease*, rather than an *increase*, of his Religion, as the world hastens to its dissolution.

Conformably with this representation, the Apostle warns his beloved disciple, in the

words of the Text, that, in after-times, "evil "men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, "deceiving and being deceived;" a warning, of which it is impossible not to be reminded in almost every page of Ecclesiastical History. What has already been brought forward in the course of our inquiries, affords abundant proof that the Apostle spake by the true spirit of Prophecy. What we have still to advance, is of similar tendency; and will shew that there is little reason to boast of our having fallen upon times more propitious to the spiritual improvement of mankind, than those which are already gone by.

The opening of the eighteenth century presented a formidable aspect, yet not altogether hopeless, to the friends of Christianity. Deism was making rapid strides: but the attention of the learned and the pious was awakened to the danger; and the aids of sound literature and solid argumentation were brought with alacrity in defence of the Christian Faith. The venerable Founder of these Lectures had, by his well-timed Institution, provided an incitement to such as were "steadfast in the Faith," openly to engage in its service and to combat every new antagonist that might arise:

and so successfully for Christianity was this warfare conducted, that, perhaps, no Writer of any reputation in the ranks of Infidelity escaped merited chastisement. The emissaries of Satan, however, were not easily repulsed or discouraged; but contended (as they always have done) with a zeal and pertinacity worthy of a better cause.

The three Deistical Impostors of the preceding Century, whose works have been already noticed[i], had laid the groundwork of the design; and labourers were not wanting to complete the superstructure. The names of Blount, Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Woolston, Tindal, Morgan, and Chubb, stand foremost on this list among our own countrymen, and rank high in the estimation of Infidels. To mark the shades of difference discernible in the tenets of these several promoters of error, is of little moment: since, for the most part, they trod in the footsteps of one or other of their predecessors, and were entitled to little more than a borrowed reputation. Each, however, had some peculiarities, and strove in some point or other to outdo his fellow-labourers in mischief.

One of these[k] was extremely assiduous in reviving the exploded pretensions of Apollo-

[i] See Sermon IX. page 284. [k] Blount.

nius, and in endeavouring to shew his superiority in miraculous powers to the Saviour of the world.

Another[l] principally attacked the Canon of Scripture, for the purpose of proving that there was no better authority for the received books of Holy Writ, than for those which were rejected as spurious. The same Author also took much pains to establish the Pantheistic principles of Spinosa.

A third[m] insisted, that the doctrine of future Rewards and Punishments is degrading to the human understanding, and detrimental to moral virtue; which ought always to be practised upon purer and more *disinterested* principles. He also charged Christianity with Enthusiasm; and contended, that Ridicule is the most certain test of Truth; insinuating, that if Christianity had been thus attacked in the first instance, it had most probably fallen to the ground: forgetting, however, as it should seem, or wilfully overlooking the fact, that Christianity *was* thus assailed on its first promulgation, by men of extraordinary talents for sarcasm and ridicule, in addition to the severer trials which it underwent of terror and persecution.

[l] Toland. [m] Lord Shaftesbury.

Another[n], adopting the general principle of most of his predecessors, respecting the perfection of human Reason and the total incompatibility of a Divine Revelation with the natural rights of *rational* creatures, carried his system so far as boldly to declare it to be *impossible* that God should more fully make known his will to mankind than he had already done by the *law of nature*. This Author thought proper, however, occasionally to veil his attacks on the Gospel with more art and decency than some of his contemporaries, whose offensive ribaldry had brought discredit on the Infidel cause. He appears to have been the first who assumed for himself, and bestowed on his coadjutors, the denomination of *Christian Deists;* a title well calculated to gain proselytes among wavering half-believers in the Gospel, though, according to the principles of Deism, as maintained even by this its advocate, it implied no less than an absolute contradiction in terms.

Another of these bold pretenders[o], while he seemed disposed to make more *concessions* than some of his associates had done, displayed his ingenuity in endeavouring to overturn the conclusions which any impar-

[n] Tindal. [o] Morgan.

tial reasoner would have drawn from those concessions, in favour of Revelation. He admits the possibility and even the utility of Revelation; but artfully destroys the effect of the admission, by confounding Revelation with man's natural Reason, which, he contends, may with equal propriety be denominated Revelation, because it is given by the Deity; and which he maintains to be of equal, nay paramount, authority to Sacred Writ, because by its decisions respecting the wisdom or propriety of what is revealed, every supposed Revelation must stand or fall. This position is evidently intended to deprive Christianity of the benefit of any *external* evidences in its behalf. Accordingly, under the title of *traditional* Revelations, he examines both the Jewish and Christian Religions, the former of which he openly reprobates, and the latter (except so far as he can reconcile it with his Deistical tenets) he regards as full of Jewish prejudices and absurdities; on which account, he describes those in general who believe in it, as *Christian Jews*.

Another of the fraternity[q] proceeds yet further, not only vilifying the Gospel as a mere modification of Judaism, but asserting that it alters Judaism in some things *for the*

[q] Chubb.

worse. He even accuses our Lord of inculcating moral precepts of a pernicious tendency: and in a strain of coarse invective arraigns the fundamental doctrines of Providence, a Future State, and Divine Inspiration, as altogether irrational. After which, it can occasion no great surprise, that this same confident and shameless Writer should speak favourably of *Mahometanism*, as if it had something like just pretensions to a divine original; and should consider a Jew, a Pagan, a Mahometan, and a Christian, as all equally acceptable in the sight of God.

Another of these Writers[q] (one of the most subtle and mischievous of the tribe) inculcates similar notions respecting the character of Judaism; but sets up a new argument to shew the entire dependence of Christianity upon the Jewish Revelation for its credibility and support. He rejects as inadmissible every kind of testimony in its behalf, except that which may be drawn from *Prophecy literally accomplished;* and this he represents as the sole and exclusive evidence, on which our Lord and his Apostles rested the proof of the Christian Faith. His ingenuity is then exercised, in endeavouring to find a variety of

[q] Collins.

instances wherein the prophecies of the Old Testament were *not* thus literally fulfilled in the New; whence he leaves his readers to infer, that Christianity being (according to *his* exposition of Scripture) deprived of this particular species of evidence, has *no* solid foundation whatever. Arguing thus from some few instances of prophecies or occurrences in the Old Testament, which appear to have been fulfilled only in a typical or figurative sense in the New, he strives to discredit the whole of the Scriptures, as if supported merely by fanciful and allegorical interpretations, and incapable of solid proofs. He daringly describes the Prophets themselves as libertines and impostors; and, having previously assumed it as a fundamental position, that no proof from Miracles, or from evidence of any kind whether external or internal, ought to have weight in the discussion, except *that* from the literal interpretation of Prophecy, (which he thus endeavours to overthrow,) he seems to imagine that he has effectually demolished the whole fabric of Christianity.

But there is yet another Writer[r] to be noticed, of the same period, and of a more

[r] Woolston.

eccentric and peculiar turn of mind; who made an attempt to destroy the credit of the Gospel History, by the bold and singular hypothesis that the whole is merely *Allegory* or Fable; maintaining that it is utterly incredible as *a matter of fact*, and was never intended by the Evangelists themselves to be understood in any other than a mystical or parabolical sense. This he affirms to have been the opinion of the most celebrated Fathers of the Church, and to be the only tenable ground for the defence of the Gospel. As in the preceding instance the credit of *Prophecy* was assailed, so in *this* the testimony of *Miracles* was particularly designed to be overthrown: and in support of the Author's hypothesis are introduced (as might well be expected from such a monstrous position) the most palpable perversion of plain circumstantial narratives, together with the grossest slanders and most indecent ribaldry that ever stained the page of controversy.

In addition to these more distinguished Authors, several anonymous libellers[s] stept forth to join the phalanx, and to increase the

[s] The Authors of "Christianity not founded on Argument."—"The Resurrection of Jesus continued."—"Deism fairly stated,"—and others.

clamour against Revealed Religion. But the Writer who brings up the rear of these assailants, and whose labours were, perhaps, the most successful in promoting their object, was the celebrated *Bolingbroke*, a nobleman of considerable talents and learning, but still more remarkable for his bold and dictatorial spirit. Few of the motley fraternity of Philosophers have manifested a more inordinate share of vanity and self-conceit than this Writer, or have evinced a more inveterate hatred to Revealed Religion. His mode of attack is, indeed, vague and desultory. Affecting (after the manner of Hobbes) some respect for Christianity as the *Religion of the State*, his declared design is to distinguish what he calls pure and genuine Theism from the profane mixtures of human imagination; and to seek for true Christianity with that simplicity and singleness of heart inculcated by our Blessed Saviour; taking for his only guides the *works* and the *word* of God. Notwithstanding these plausible pretensions, he pours forth most bitter invectives against the Sacred Writings. He likens the Pentateuch to the wildest tales of Romance. He styles it blasphemy, to assert the Jewish Scriptures to be divinely inspired; and those who vindicate them he maligns as

worse than Atheists. He reviles the doctrine of *Redemption*, as utterly repugnant to the Divine justice, wisdom, and goodness. He arraigns the Jewish notions of God as abominable, and the Christian representations of him as still worse. He charges St. Paul with dissimulation and madness; with preaching a Gospel contradictory to that of Christ; and with writing either unintelligibly, or in an absurd, profane, and trifling manner[1]. Setting aside these and other virulent reflections upon Revealed Religion and its Ministers, the sum of his system has been reduced, by those who have well considered it, to a few fundamental propositions, not unlike to those of his great prototype Lord Herbert, but couched in terms more indecent and disrespectful, and more directly insulting to the majesty of the Supreme Being.

Such were the Writers who signalized themselves in this country as propagators of Deism, from the beginning to the middle of the eighteenth Century. These, in conjunction with the vain and superficial wits of the age, were associated together under the denomination of *Free-thinkers;* a term grossly misapplied, if understood to denote a freedom from partiality and prejudice, since none,

[1] See Leland's Deistical Writers, Vol. I. Letter 22.

perhaps, ever proved themselves more slavishly addicted to a few favourite leaders, whom they suffered entirely to hoodwink their understandings, and to lead them, almost without inquiry or consideration, into the depths of error and delusion.

It is difficult to calculate the mischief effected by these infatuated men. But when we find, that to be tainted with Infidelity was considered as an almost certain criterion of wit, knowledge, and good-breeding; we cannot but suppose, that among the vain and superficial, (who constitute always a majority of mankind,) great numbers were led astray. It is also evident to those who carefully examine their respective labours, that Infidels of more recent date have greatly availed themselves of these productions of their predecessors in impiety; so that, although for the most part the Authors themselves are now unheeded and forgotten, yet through the medium of modern plagiarists they are restored, as it were, to new life and vigour: though dead, they yet utter the voice of blasphemy, and retain the power of spreading it far and wide.

These considerations are sufficient to warrant us in laying so great a stress upon the works of those Infidels who disgraced this

country in the former part of the last Century. Vain, dogmatical, and presumptuous; some of them also contemptibly feeble and ignorant; their Writings were nevertheless received with an astonishing degree of admiration and applause among the licentious and inconsiderate. Such, moreover, was the success of their efforts, as to gain them a temporary fame, at least, and to rescue their works from that entire oblivion which they deserved.

But these works claim our attention from their influence upon *other* countries, as well as upon our own. Italy and France have already been noticed as giving birth to the first disseminators of modern Deism. But when this mischievous production had once found its way into this Country, it made a most rapid progress; and it was transplanted back to its native soil, in a state of increased vigour and maturity. Such, indeed, was the celebrity of England, and such its influence upon the literature, science, and philosophy, of all Europe; that the great infidel Historian of France[t] acknowledges, that the age of Louis XIV. might in these respects with equal or greater propriety, have been called the Age of *the*

[t] Voltaire. Siècle de Louis XIV. tom. 3. chap. 31.

English nation. He remarks likewise, that *the truly philosophic spirit* (by which it is well known that he means the spirit of *Deism* and *Atheism*) had not *taken root* till this period. The seeds had been sown long before, and they had sprung up and increased with surprising rapidity. But they had not heretofore taken such deep root as to render the extirpation of them an almost hopeless undertaking. This is an additional proof that our country stands justly reproached with having very much contributed to the diffusion of this formidable evil. The reputation of English Writers stood high on the Continent at that juncture. Physics, Metaphysics, Mathematics, Ethics, all were more assiduously and successfully cultivated in England than in any other country: and many among us were unhappily disposed to misapply these attainments to the disparagement of the Christian Religion. Foreign literati, whilst they were eager to profit by the researches of our really scientific Philosophers, imported with equal if not greater avidity the pestilential productions of our perverters of Reason and Science. They appear, indeed, to have been as much disposed at that time to adopt *our* follies, vices, and errors, as we

have of late years been to imitate *theirs*. Hence arose a general lukewarmness and indifference respecting all Religion, natural and revealed; and men's minds being unsettled with regard to the truth of Christianity, no fixed principles remained, on which they could rest with any degree of confidence or satisfaction.

After the labours of most of the abovementioned Infidels had ceased, and their Authors had been called away to give an account of them at a more awful tribunal than that of human opinion, there arose a worthy successor to them in their undertaking; one of the most subtle and dangerous opponents that Christianity ever met with in this country. This was the admired Historian, *Hume;* whose ambition to excel likewise as a philosopher led him to *Metaphysical* researches, which he prosecuted with an extraordinary assiduity, and applied with most mischievous effect to his designs against Revealed Religion.

Great was the admiration of Metaphysical learning early in the last Century: and so highly was it esteemed even by the friends of Revelation as well as by its enemies, that few controversies were maintained without an ostentatious display, on either side, of

proficiency in this branch of Science;—of Science "falsely so called," when applied to the subject of Religion, being incompetent to lead us to any of its fundamental truths, and far more likely to "engender strifes and "doubtful disputations" than to advance the cause of Truth. Hence, we may be the less surprised that Infidels should eagerly resort to it, as one of the readiest and most convenient weapons for the warfare in which they are engaged. That *Hume* was no inconsiderable adept in this species of polemics, will appear from a brief analysis of his principles and opinions. It will also be equally evident, that, in his rage for Scepticism, he sets at defiance principles the most firmly established and most universally received.

In his inquiries into the nature of that species of *Evidence* by which matters of fact are to be proved, this Author denies that any certain inference can be drawn from the connection between cause and effect. Accordingly, he labours to overthrow the argument for the existence of God from the frame of the Universe. He endeavours also to prove that no conclusive argument can justly be drawn from *experience*. He further asserts that we can have no certainty

of the truth of any thing, unless we are able to explain the manner of it, or how it is: and in arguing against *Miracles*, he insists that there is an inviolable uniformity in nature, such as never is, and never can be, broken. Another of his favourite positions is, that we cannot reasonably conclude any thing respecting the Divine power or wisdom in the formation of the Universe, because the subject lies entirely beyond the reach of human *experience;* and that Creation being a *singular effect*, we cannot infer its *cause*, or in other words, we cannot infer that it had a Creator. With respect to *a future state*, he denies (with Bolingbroke) that we have any such evidence of the Divine attributes as can lead us to expect it, much less to expect any other *rewards* or *punishments* than what this life affords: in the establishment of which point, he insists that we ought not to ascribe to the Supreme Being any attribute or perfection, unless we see it *fully* exerted in this present world, without any appearance of disorder or irregularity. Miracles, he endeavours to demonstrate, are incapable of being proved by any evidence whatsoever. *Experience* he, in this instance, assumes to be the only proper Guide in matters of fact, though, according to his reason-

ing here and elsewhere he regards experience itself as delusive. The course of nature, he observes, is uniform; therefore, there is an *uniform experience* against miracles, and, consequently, a full and entire proof of their falsehood. With regard to human testimony, he argues, that when it is produced in attestation of a miracle, it is contrary to our experience of the course of nature, and therefore creates a contest of *two opposite experiences*, or *proof against proof;* of which the one destroys the other, supposing both to be equal; or of which, if unequal, the strongest must prevail. But, as there is *uniform* experience against a miracle, there is full and direct proof against its existence; and consequently, no man can believe it, without renouncing his understanding. He allows, however, that we have nothing to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses as have attested the miracles of the Gospel, except the absolute *impossibility*, or (which he regards as the same thing) the *miraculous nature* of the event. Next, he endeavours to prove, that in point of *fact* there never was a miraculous event, in any history, established upon evidence deserving of credit. He argues, that, considering the proneness of mankind to believe wonders, we ought to reject them

even without examination; that the accounts of them abound most among barbarous and ignorant nations; and that opposite miracles are said to have been wrought in support of different Religions, so as to destroy one another. He also narrates several fictitious miracles, in order to discredit real ones. But in all this, it may be remarked, the Author seems to admit that if miracles were accompanied with their proper proofs they might rationally be believed; notwithstanding his former position that *no testimony whatever* can render them credible; which position, if it were valid, would render all further argument superfluous. Lest, however, this favourite argument should fail of producing conviction, he has accumulated many trite and often-refuted objections respecting the characters and conduct of the Apostles; insinuating, that to be venerated as Prophets and inspired Messengers of God was a great temptation to imposture; that the Gospel, in its infancy, was disregarded by the wise and learned; that afterwards the records necessary to disprove it were either lost or destroyed; and that its preachers were men of no credit or respectability. After various insignificant observations on the credulity of mankind and the prevalence of false Re-

ligions in the world, he proceeds to cavil at the *morality* of the Gospel, scandalously traducing it as having a tendency to stupify the understanding, to harden the heart, and to sour the tempers of mankind.

Strangely incoherent and absurd as this system appears, it served to procure for its Author an extensive though disgraceful, reputation, both here and in foreign countries. Its very obscurity, perhaps, contributed to increase its reputation among the vain and ignorant: and many, it is probable, not only gave the Author credit for extraordinary discernment, but implicitly adopted his opinions, from being as little able to *understand* his arguments as to *refute* them. Happily, however, for the interests of true Philosophy, Morals, and Religion, his sophistry was fully exposed, and treated with the censure and ridicule which it deserved, by men of admirable talents, who furnished an effectual antidote to the poison he so insidiously administered.

While Metaphysics were thus employed in the service of Infidelity, every other branch of Science was likewise compelled to lend its aid. Wonderful was the assiduity with which the philosophers of *France* laboured, in their grand performance, the *Encyclopedia*, for the

subversion of Revealed Religion. Mathematics, Astronomy, Natural History, all were brought forward, with a view to efface the proofs of Revelation or to discredit its doctrines. The researches into these departments of Science, being made under the bias of Scepticism or absolute Unbelief as to all religious subjects, and with a view to undermine the foundations of Christianity, produced deplorable effects even upon well-intentioned readers, as well as upon those whose minds were already tainted by false Philosophy. *Travels* were undertaken with similar intentions, and operated greatly to the increase of Infidelity among the superficial and unsuspecting. *History* was pressed into the same service; and the very sources of information, with respect to both ancient and modern occurrences, were vitiated by artful misrepresentations, by the exaggeration or palliation of various transactions, and occasionally even by the invention or suppression of important facts and circumstances, to give a false colouring to the records which corroborate the truth of Christianity. Among various instances of perverted talents and ingenuity in this particular branch of literature, none, perhaps, have been productive of so much injury to religion in this country,

as the work of the late celebrated Historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; a Writer who has been convicted in not a few instances, of falsifying facts, for the purpose of casting reproach upon Christianity; and, in many more, of putting a deceitful gloss upon his narrative, and insinuating such observations as may betray his readers into a contempt of Revealed Religion, and shake their belief in the facts on which its credibility depends.

In addition to these numerous attacks upon the Christian Faith, a singular attempt was made not many years since to revive the follies of *Paganism*, and gravely to propose them to the acceptance of a Christian community as the only oracles of wisdom and truth. This was chiefly the endeavour of a writer[u], whose over-curious researches into the depths of Platonism and its mystical interpreters seem to have strangely bewildered his understanding. The proselytes to this cause, we may trust, were few; nor would so fanatical and absurd an attempt be worthy of notice, did it not serve to shew to what strange infatuation men of real erudition and of considerable intellectual attainments may be brought, by disregarding the oracles of

[u] Taylor.

Sacred Truth and yielding to the reveries of a vain and inflated Imagination.

Thus, under the pretence of philosophizing upon every subject, the wit and ingenuity of Sophists were exercised in distorting truth, of whatever kind, so as to give it an aspect unfavourable to Revealed Religion. In carrying on this extended warfare against Christianity, some persons, no doubt, contributed their aid who were by no means fully aware of the mischief; being stimulated by the desire of gaining reputation as learned and scientific men, rather than by any intentional hostility to the Gospel of Christ. These were truly of that description whom St. Paul represents as "deceiving, and being deceived." But such was the artful conduct of Unbelievers, that no pains were spared to exalt the labours of every one whose writings might have even the remotest *tendency* to promote their object, and to suppress, or bring into contempt, whatever might contribute to confirm the truth of Revelation.

While Sophistry, under the semblance of Learning and Science, was thus gaining ground in the closets of the studious and inquisitive, a system of a more attractive kind was preparing for the gay and unthinking part of mankind. By one of the most distinguished

wits of his time[x], (a man of high rank in society, and taking the lead in all the refinements and elegancies of polished life,) something like a *Code of Practical Irreligion* was promulgated, from which all reverence for moral and religious principles seemed to be purposely discarded, and in their stead were substituted certain rules of exterior courtesy, formed professedly upon maxims of insincerity and deceit, and so opposite to the spirit of the Gospel that, (as an acute observer has justly remarked,) instead of "love without "dissimulation," they inculcated dissimulation without love[y]. Without any direct attack upon Christianity, the writings of this Author (whose total indifference to the authority of Revelation is every where conspicuous) insinuated such poison into the minds of frivolous and inconsiderate persons, as no arguments, perhaps, however weighty and irrefragable, could entirely remove: and much is it to be feared that they have had a powerful influence upon many, who might have been inaccessible to the wiles of argumentative sophistry, because indisposed to encounter the fatigue of elaborate investigation.

But that which principally contributed to the dissemination of Infidel principles

[x] Lord Chesterfield. [y] Jones.

throughout Europe during the last Century, was the avowed patronage and active assistance of the most distinguished Prince of his age, Frederic the Second, King of Prussia; whose exertions, together with those of the most celebrated French Philosophers of his time, for the express purpose of overthrowing Christianity, have been so fully developed in publications of recent date[z], that it is unnecessary to detail the proofs of them at large. Sufficient evidence indeed might be produced, from the posthumous works and correspondence of Frederic himself, that a systematic conspiracy of this kind was carried on, under his auspices, in almost every State in Europe. Like the Emperor Julian, this vain, ambitious, and artful Prince conceived an early hatred to the Gospel, wrought into his mind by an unhappy intercourse with unprincipled Sophists, who availed themselves of the indiscipline and inexperience of his youth, to instil into him sentiments the most profligate and licentious. Like Julian also, in his more advanced years he became desirous of converting the whole civilized world into a seminary of Infidelity; with this only difference, that instead of introducing the follies and foppe-

[z] Abbé Barruel's History of Jacobinism, and Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy against all Religions.

ries of Paganism, his aim was to substitute for Christianity a dreary system of Atheism, or of a Deism so nearly approaching to Atheism as to afford no better prospect to its deluded followers. For this purpose, the Philosophical Societies in most of the European States were put under the superintendence of men deeply infected with what was dignified by the appellation of Philosophical Unbelief. Correspondence was kept up between these Societies, and between individuals embarked in this great undertaking, however remote from each other. Literary journals were carried on, with the intent of giving celebrity and circulation to those works only which should bear the marks of the Infidel Beast in their foreheads; and to stifle in the birth, if possible, every production hostile to their design. Statesmen and Courtiers were also busied in obtaining the favour and encouragement of their respective Sovereigns, towards the ambitious and assuming philosophers of the age; so that scarcely a department of any importance was filled but by them or their weak and servile dependents. Thus did they endeavour to compel Religion to hide itself as a thing of nought, "a despised "and broken Idol," fit only for the veneration of the illiterate and the vulgar.

To the truth of this representation, as far as it respects the Continent of Europe, so many incontrovertible testimonies have been laid before the public, and lie open to every one's investigation, that it is in vain to call it in question. Our own country (blessed be God!) has not, indeed, entirely kept pace with its continental neighbours in this career of vice and blasphemy. But it is liable to the just reproach of having powerfully *aided* them in their iniquitous design. For, whence were the Infidels in general of the last Century *instructed* in the fatal art of thus deceiving themselves and others to their perdition, but from the pestilential productions which, in the former part of it, issued from the *British* press? If the writings of their most dangerous authors, even of Voltaire himself, the High-Priest of blasphemy and impiety, be attentively scrutinized: little, perhaps, will be found in them but loose and desultory observations gleaned from his predecessors both ancient and modern; and especially from the mischievous performances of our countrymen. Other writers of his own age and nation have availed themselves of the same resources; and have, perhaps, with more methodical arrangement combined them into a systematic form. For, it is chiefly in

the dangerous talent of insinuation, in sneers and sarcasms, in incidental suggestions, in ridicule and affected contempt, that this Writer excels, seducing his readers into opinions the most false and pernicious, without any regular discussion of the points in question, or any direct arguments in support of his positions.

Thus have we in a cursory manner brought down the History of Infidelity, almost to the present time. Many other circumstances might have been detailed, characteristic of the perverseness of modern Unbelievers. Observations might also have been made upon the pernicious effects of Heterodoxy and Fanaticism, in promoting Scepticism and Irreligion; since it were not unjust, perhaps, to attribute a very considerable portion of the Infidelity of the last century, to the indefatigable exertions of Socinians and other Heretics to bring the fundamental *Doctrines* of the Christian Faith into contempt and derision; or to the labours of enthusiastic Sectaries to overthrow its *Discipline*. But in pursuing these inquiries, we might be induced to wander too far from our immediate object.

One only portion of modern History remains yet for investigation, and that of so

copious and interesting a nature as to demand a separate discussion. We, of the present day, have lived to witness such an astonishing and tremendous convulsion of the political, moral, and religious world, as never, perhaps, was before experienced, since the establishment of Christianity. The Infidelity of these last days carries with it features of the most remarkable kind: and the materials which it supplies for awful reflection are many in number and peculiar in character. Indeed, from what has already been advanced, we see how fearful and how rapid is the progress of impiety; and how easily it happens, that "evil men and se- "ducers wax worse and worse;" when they *associate* together and strengthen each other in wickedness. The *solitary* Atheist, who in his closet weaves the web of sophistry, though he may occasion the destruction of some few who heedlessly entangle themselves in his toils, is rather an object of contempt than of terror. But when men of turbulent and ambitious spirit, covetous of applause, or anxious to lessen their own uneasiness by communicating a portion of it to others, "encourage themselves in mischief, "and commune among themselves how they "may lay snares, and say, that no man shall

"see them[a];"—*then* it is that the work of Satan prospers.

But we are anticipating the remainder of our inquiry by these reflections. Let us, then, in contemplating the past trials to which the cause of truth has been exposed, learn to look up to that God from whom cometh our Salvation for protection against the Adversary; recollecting those encouraging assurances in Holy Writ;—"though "*hand join in hand*, the wicked shall not be "unpunished: but the seed of the righteous "shall be delivered[b]:" for, "the Lord know- "eth the way of the righteous: and the way "of the ungodly shall perish[c]."

[a] Ps. lxiv. 5. [b] Prov. xi. 21. [c] Ps. i. 7.

SERMON XI.

2 Peter iii. 3.

There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.

What the sacred Writers intend by "the "last days," is a question concerning which some difference of opinion may be entertained. The expression appears in general to denote the times of the Christian Dispensation, as subsequent to those of the Jewish, and as the final completion of the Divine purpose in the Redemption of mankind. But there are some passages of Scripture, in which it evidently refers to the latter ages of Christianity itself, or the times immediately preceding the dissolution of the world.—Not unfrequently it may be taken in *both* senses, without confusion or impropriety. For, as the destruction of Jerusalem, by which the Jewish polity was dissolved, may justly be regarded as an event *typical*

of another and more general catastrophe, the final dissolution of the world; so the characteristic features of the age in which that event took place, may be considered as no less applicable to the last days of the *Christian* than to those of the *Jewish* dispensation, and will admit in like manner of a twofold interpretation. When, therefore, we read the predictions of those tremendous calamities which were brought upon Jerusalem and its impenitent inhabitants; we are led to regard them likewise as prophetical warnings of the final destruction of all the sinful dwellers upon earth; and we are taught to "discern the signs of the times," (of those times which shall immediately precede the final consummation of all things,) in the prefigurative representations of the madness, the impiety, and the infatuation, of Jewish Unbelievers. The more carefully we investigate this double meaning of the Prophecies in question, the more clearly shall we perceive their application to *both* events; and the more thoroughly shall we be impressed with a conviction of their Divine origin and their universal importance.

The description which in the words of the Text the Apostle gives of "the last days," is one out of many passages in Scripture capable

of this twofold application.—"There shall "come in the last days scoffers, walking "after their own lusts."—*Scoffers* there always have been, (men deriding and contemning the will of God, and following their own imaginations in opposition to that will,) from the first promulgation of Christianity to the present hour. Jews, Heathen, Turks, and Infidels of every denomination, have, at all times, employed ridicule for the purpose of subverting the foundations of the Gospel, and prevailing upon mankind to regard it with contempt. But if it be *more* characteristic of one age than of another, to abound in such opponents to Truth and to be distinguished by such marks of Impiety; have we not reason to consider the present day as preeminently entitled to that distinction, and therefore as indicating, perhaps, the approaching close of the Christian Dispensation upon earth? For, in like manner as the Jewish people, immediately previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, grew worse and worse, more infatuated in their opposition to the Gospel, more licentious and profligate in their conduct, more profane and irreverent in their disregard of the manifest interpositions of Divine power for their reformation and conviction; so does it appear, that, in these "latter times," the nearer the

awful day of the Lord approaches, when "all "these things shall be dissolved," the more madly does the world rage against its Creator and Redeemer, the more desperately does it rush on its own ruin, and scoff at the Divine judgments with increased audacity and contempt.

Many facts have been already brought forward, tending to verify this representation of the growing impiety of the latter ages. Our attention is now to be directed to the last grand attack which has been made on the Gospel; and which, under all its circumstances, may well be considered as the most formidable which it has yet encountered.

The Anti-Christian conspiracy carried on under the auspices of Frederic of Prussia, (though its commencement must be dated, perhaps, from a somewhat earlier period,) had extended so far, even during the lives of its principal movers, as to have been sensibly felt by every State in Europe. But these original framers of the conspiracy did not live to see it produce its full effect. As far as the *higher* ranks of society were concerned, they had indeed been eminently successful. Infidelity was through their influence regarded as the criterion of genius, learning, and science; and in *France* more especially it

was rare to meet with any one whose pretensions to these qualities were admitted, unless he bore this mark of distinction. The influence of such men upon the *inferior* orders of the community must also of necessity have been very great. Nevertheless, the devotees of Impiety saw that there was still much to do, in order to accomplish the utter extirpation of Christianity. The great mass of mankind, however ignorant of the grounds on which their Faith is built, or uninquisitive as to its proofs and evidences, generally feel a strong and lively *interest* in its promises. Depraved and sensual as they may be, the troubles and sorrows of this world will occasionally press upon their minds, and give rise to hopes which nothing can satisfy, and anxieties which nothing can allay, but the solid expectations to be derived from Revealed Religion. Where such expectations have been imbibed from early childhood, and have been sanctioned as it were by the concurrent belief of fathers, forefathers, relations, friends, and associates; something like *violence* must be done to the mind, before it can be diverted from this accustomed channel of thinking, and be brought to acquiesce in the cheerless prospects of Scepticism.—With all that had been done therefore, by modern Sophists

towards eradicating these *prejudices*, (as they were called,) they had hitherto levelled their artillery somewhat *above* the multitude: and so hopeless did this part of their undertaking appear, that even the chief Leader of the conspiracy frequently declared that they must for the present be content to "root out Chris-"tianity from among the *better* sort, and leave "it to the *rabble*, for whom it was made[d]."

The labours, however, of the later accomplices in this dreadful design were, in process of time, directed towards the propagation of their principles among those whom they had hitherto affected to regard as unworthy of their attention. Their object was to be attained by nothing less than *universal* Apostasy; neither could their fiend-like ambition be satisfied, without depriving the Redeemer of *all* the souls for whom his precious blood was shed.

In the means adopted for accomplishing this end, much subtlety and a great knowledge of the worst propensities of mankind were displayed.—The examples of persons in high stations of life, and the continued opportunities afforded to the multitude of hearing the most blasphemous sentiments uttered

[d] See Voltaire's Correspondence with Frederic, D'Alembert, and others.

and applauded by their superiors, must have greatly forwarded a general defection from the Faith. But it was not on such *incidental* opportunities only that these active spirits relied, for effecting the intended mischief.

The Societies which, under various mystical denominations, were formed and connected with each other in various parts of Europe, served as a bond of union in the projected confederacy against Religion. By their active and combined exertions, the destructive work was chiefly promoted; nor can it easily be conceived by any one who has not perused the details of their iniquitous proceedings, to what extent their labours were carried, and with what prodigious success they were attended. Still less would it enter into an honest and ingenuous mind, to frame an adequate idea of the consummate art by which unsuspecting persons were seduced to become effective promoters of the most rancorous hostility to every thing sacred or virtuous.

The miscreant, (for, by what other appellation can we characterise such a man[e]?) who presided over these associations in Germany, and kept up a constant correspondence and cooperation with subordinate institutions of the same kind in other countries, makes it

[e] Weishaupt. See Barruel and Robison.

his continual boast that he had so effectually concealed his object, even from those who imagined themselves to have been admitted to the full disclosure of his mysteries, that none but the chosen few who were joint conspirators with himself suspected any hostile design against Christianity. He contrived to render the very doctrines of the Gospel instruments of blasphemy and impiety, by perverting them to a specious conformity with his own abominable system. Our Blessed Saviour was represented as the Founder of this new Philosophy; as the Preacher of *Reason*, in the acceptation of that term by Deists and Atheists; and as being the Saviour and Deliverer of the world, in the sense only of emancipating mankind from the servitude of Religion and Social Order. The Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the Institution of the Christian Priesthood were, by profane mimicry, applied as emblematical of this Anti-Christian scheme. Thus, in the minutest particulars of these horrible mysteries, did "Satan transform himself into an "Angel of light;" exhibiting so artful a resemblance between Christ and Belial, that thousands were deceived to their destruction; their ignorance and inadvertency being so gradually wrought upon by these impostures,

that, from harmless and undesigning associates, they became at last determined enemies to the Gospel, and Apostates the most virulent and ferocious. Wonderful and almost incredible as the narrative of these facts appears, it is supported by abundant evidence, drawn from the writings of the Conspirators themselves and of their Infidel Biographers; and it remains, as to its most prominent and important points, unshaken, notwithstanding the efforts of some interested opponents to destroy its credit.

Connected with these abominations were other projects, more immediately directed towards the *lower* classes of the community. Schools of Atheism and Immorality were established, at vast expense and trouble, in unfrequented villages as well as in populous districts. Manuals of infidelity adapted to the taste and comprehension of the vulgar, and abounding with low ridicule on the most sacred subjects, were gratuitously circulated among those who might never otherwise have *heard* of the existence of an Atheist or a Deist. These publications issued in incalculable numbers from secret associations formed for that purpose; and were dispersed in such a manner as to elude the vigilance of the Laws.

It was another most pernicious object of this formidable confederacy, to corrupt the *Female Sex* and to render them active promoters of Infidelity. Well knowing the influence of Female conduct upon the manners, sentiments, and principles of mankind, it was the endeavour of these "children of "Hell," to pervert the greatest blessing which God hath bestowed on man in this lower world into his greatest curse and misery. Instead of adorning herself "with shame-"facedness and sobriety[f]," and with that "or-"nament of a meek and quiet spirit which "is in the sight of God of great price[g]," Woman was taught by these Sophisters to become the agent of cunning, strife, disputation, voluptuousness, and rebellion against God and Man. Too successful were they in gaining over many of these as coadjutors in their cause; the effect of whose influence is evident in the records of modern times; —nay, is still severely felt, in our own as well as in other countries.

All ranks and descriptions of persons being thus prepared and fitted, by every species of iniquity and delusion, for the designs of their execrable leaders, we may cease to be astonished at the tremendous catastrophe

[f] 1 Tim. iii. 4. [g] 1 Peter iii. 4.

which ensued. The French Revolution (dreadful as it must be deemed, by every one who retains a sentiment of religion or humanity) is but the practical commentary on the pernicious principles in which it originated. To *these*, the destruction of the Altar, of the Throne, and of Society itself, is so clearly to be ascribed, that it is a vain attempt to trace it to any other source. Outrage upon outrage, horror upon horror, falsehood upon falsehood; the annihilation of truth, order, justice, decency, and humanity; were the bitter fruits of that Apostasy and Blasphemy, to disseminate which had been the unceasing object of the professed adorers of Liberty and Reason.

It is as needless as it would be painful and disgusting, to dwell more particularly upon this tremendous confederacy for the overthrow of Religion; to narrate its studied impieties, its blasphemous mockeries, and its almost indescribable atrocities; or to enumerate the guiltless victims of its insatiable fury. Neither is it requisite to enter into a detail of the Anti-Monarchical and Anti-Social conspiracies, which were combined with that against Christianity. We cannot but remark, however, that in this instance the Providence of God permitted an

experimental proof to be given of the pernicious tendency of Impiety, with respect to *political* as well as *moral* evils. The overthrow of Christianity in France involved in it the annihilation of every blessing civil as well as religious. Every vestige of genuine Philanthropy was swept away; and nothing was left to solace the misery of man. Tremendous also was the punishment by which many of the offenders themselves were overtaken; more especially those who had assumed the lead in bringing these disasters upon the world. Never, indeed, did the voice of Wisdom cry aloud more forcibly to the inhabitants of the earth; never did it speak in language more clear and intelligible the folly and the madness of despising God and setting at nought his judgments.

But while this terrible scene was exhibiting in France, the agents of the Evil One were not inactive in other countries. Besides the rapid progress of Impiety in almost all the Continental States of Europe, gigantic strides were made to bring *this country* likewise under its fatal dominion. Encouraged by the unparalleled success of Infidelity abroad, the enemies to the Gospel shewed themselves here in very considerable

numbers. From the blasphemous Atheist to the corrupt or insidious professor of Christianity, all were ready to join in the demolition of those sacred bulwarks of our Faith, which for ages had secured it against the attacks of former assailants.

Foremost in the ranks appeared the Authors of "*the Age of Reason*" and of the "*Inquiry into Political Justice;*" works now sinking fast (it is to be hoped) into oblivion, and consigned to just execration by every friend of Truth and Social Order. Their effects, however, on thousands of weak, ignorant, and corrupt minds, can never be sufficiently deplored: and when we recollect the indefatigable zeal and industry with which the former of these works was circulated among the very dregs of the populace, (by whom it was devoured with an avidity which bespoke the innate depravity of their minds,) it is impossible not to tremble even now at the consequences which have ensued, and which may yet ensue, from so deep-rooted and wide-spreading an evil. Every year's experience brings us, indeed, fresh proofs of the baleful influence of these and other productions of Scoffers at Religion: and although they may not have effected so general and avowed an *Apostasy* from the

Faith as was intended, yet it cannot be denied, that a very general *taint* appears to have been given to the morals of the community at large, and of the lower orders in particular, by the dissemination of what have been termed *Jacobinical* principles; principles, compounded of hatred to God and hostility to all Institutions political or religious, which tend to restrain the destructive passions and propensities of mankind. Thus it appears that even *this* favoured Country, in possession of the purest Faith and the mildest Government that ever nation was blessed with, has not been without its "generation of vipers," who have made it the labour of their lives to forward the diabolical design of man's temporal and eternal destruction.

Neither did *Europe* alone feel the dreadful concussion. Wherever the intercourse of Commerce opened an avenue for the introduction of these pests and scourges of mankind, they eagerly presented themselves; and, faithful to the cause of the great Adversary of the Truth, they proved that "the "works of their Father they would do," and that, like *him*, they "went about seeking "whom they might devour."

But we cannot form an adequate con-

ception of the extent and variety of the means employed in these latter days for the overthrow of the Gospel, unless we take into the account the more insidious devices of the Enemy, in raising up from among the very "household of faith" foes to its doctrines and principles, who, under the semblance of giving it their support, were employed in secretly undermining its foundations.

In Germany and Holland, and, perhaps, in other parts of Europe, there has long existed a tribe of Theologians who, professing a desire to make Christianity more acceptable to men of a philosophical and sceptical turn of mind, have manifested a disposition to abandon almost all its distinguishing and essential doctrines, to explain away some of its most important facts as merely allegorical representations, and to renounce its claims to Divine authority by throwing doubt upon its miraculous testimonies, and treating its sacred records as works of merely human composition. The mischiefs which have arisen from the labours of these deniers of Inspiration and heterodox interpreters of Scripture are manifested, not only by a very general abatement of that *reverence* with which the Gospel was wont to be regarded by its professors, but also by a perceptible

increase in the number of its avowed contemners.

It is also evident that in *this* Country as well as on the Continent the cause of Infidelity has been greatly assisted by Heretics and Schismatics of various description; by those who are pleased to call themselves *rational* Christians; (men "wise in their own "conceits," and refusing to receive any part of the Christian system which does not exactly quadrate with their own preconceived opinions;) and in general by the numerous fraternity of *half-believers*, nearly allied to Sceptics, Freethinkers, and Deists.

It is well known that the chief leaders of the Anti-Christian conspiracy on the Continent, (those who had sworn hostility to the Saviour of the world, in terms too shocking for recital to a Christian ear,) regarded the efforts of the *Socinians* in particular as exceedingly favourable to their views. And whoever has well considered the tendency of the voluminous writings put forth in this country by the most redoubted Champion of that Sect[h] in modern times, (a Sect, denying the Divinity of the Redeemer and "counting the "blood of the Covenant an unholy thing[i],") will hardly wonder that avowed Infidels should

[h] Dr. Priestley. [i] Heb. x. 29.

regard his works with peculiar complacency. Neither will it be thought improbable, that such as can accompany him without shuddering, in some of his bold and irreverent attacks on those passages of Holy Writ which are irreconcilable with his own tenets, should advance yet a few steps further towards *discrediting the whole*, and terminate their career in general Scepticism or Unbelief.

It is also deserving of remark, that Infidels have generally shewn a peculiar tenderness towards another well-known Sect[k], distinguished not only by their own *fanatical* pretensions to *Inspiration*, (than which nothing can tend more to bring the *true* Inspiration of the *Scriptures* into contempt,) but also by their absolute rejection of the Christian *Sacraments* and the Christian *Priesthood;* which being (as the enemies of our Faith are well aware) essential to the preservation of the Gospel, it is no wonder that they are inclined to hail as Brethren those who treat them with irreverence and neglect.

If, however, it be uncharitable to charge upon either of these, or upon any other Sects of professing Christians, an *intentional* injury to the Gospel; yet it highly concerns them seriously to consider the mischiefs which have

[k] The followers of George Fox.

flowed from their erroneous principles; while it is no less important for our own security to point out their dangerous tendency, and the readiness with which the subtlety and malice of the Enemy can apply them to his purpose.

But of those who, professing the Faith, have yet laboured to do it most essential injury, and whom charity itself can hardly exculpate from the charge of *wilfully* endeavouring to bring it into contempt, none, perhaps, appears in a more disgraceful light than a distinguished Divine of the Romish Church[1], patronised in this Country by some persons little aware of his designs. This Writer applied the whole weight of his learning and talents to an artful attack upon the Divine authority of the Scriptures. Through the medium of a new Translation of the Bible, he strives to shew that these Scriptures are entitled to no other respect or veneration than what is due to them as curious remains of antiquity. To impress this persuasion upon his readers, he has recourse to the most bitter satire and ridicule; endeavouring to exhibit them as utterly unworthy of being considered as the word of God. Trite infidel objections, gleaned from various sources, are plentifully interspersed; and, under a show of more satisfac-

[1] Dr. Geddes.

torily *illustrating* the Sacred Code and reconciling it to the prejudices of Philosophical Unbelievers, (a favourite apology, or a plausible pretext, with many, for rendering the word of God subservient to human opinions,) the most unwarrantable liberties are taken with the Text, evidently for the purpose of misrepresenting some of the most important facts and doctrines of Holy Writ. It is difficult to conceive a more artful mode than this of assailing its divine authority: and had the Writer lived to complete his design, it is impossible to say how much Revealed Religion might have suffered. But, happily, his efforts (highly as they have been extolled by Critics of similar principles with his own) have not obtained a very extensive circulation; and as it has pleased God to remove him before his labours were nearly completed, we may trust that not all the unmerited commendations of his infidel encomiasts will be able to rescue his work from speedy oblivion.

From these and other instances which might be brought, we are compelled to assign to our own country a considerable share in the general Impiety of the age. It must be confessed, however, that the *English* Infidels of the present day do not stand convicted of having actually *conspired* together, like those

on the Continent, to effect their purpose. We may also boast, with honest pride and gratitude, that our own countrymen appear to have been less generally contaminated than those of other countries; that Infidelity has not yet dared to rear its crest so insolently among us; and that some degree of veneration still prevails for that pure and sound branch of Christ's Church which, under God's good providence, flourishes in this favoured land.

With respect to unbelievers of a different description from those to whose efforts our attention has now been directed, the overpowering influence of the confederacy among *Philosophical* Infidels almost compels us to overlook them, as opponents of inferior note. Judaism and Mahometanism have been, indeed, and still are, decidedly hostile to the cause of Christianity; but, in these latter times they are to be regarded rather as *passive* than *active* instruments in obstructing its success.

The *Jews*, as a collective body, have long ceased to be formidable adversaries to the Gospel. It seems probable, indeed, that the number of those who are really sincere in their profession, is diminishing rather than increasing; there being reason to apprehend that many among them (like their predeces-

sors Acosta and Spinosa) are receding further and further from the Gospel, by adopting some or other of the Deistical or Atheistical systems in which modern times have been so prolific. Complaints of this kind are said to be not unfrequent among the more zealous professors of their faith. So far, then, as this may have been the case, the Jew is sunk in the philosophical Unbeliever. But the honest and sincere Jew still appears to entertain the same rooted prejudice that his forefathers had against the Christian Covenant; looking for a *temporal* Messiah, to collect his brethren from the various countries of the earth wherein they are dispersed, to enable them to triumph over both the Crescent and the Cross, and to bring all the kingdoms of the earth into subjection to their power.

As to the disciples of *Mahomet*, they have not the same opportunities as heretofore for the exercise of that hatred and ferocity towards Christian States which their Religion inculcates. The Ottoman power is daily sinking into such feebleness and insignificance, as seem ominous of its speedy dissolution. Among "the signs of the times," this is one which cannot but arrest the attention of the Christian spectator; since, to whatever causes its decline may be attributed, the Chris-

tian will assuredly find in it fresh testimonies to the truth of the Scripture Prophecies. But it is scarcely to be doubted that some of these hitherto impersuasible Enthusiasts have been found accessible to the seductions of modern Infidels. It has long since been more than suspected, that among the professors of Mahometanism there was a considerable number who had imbibed Atheistic notions from Averroes and his Epicurean disciples. Abundant opportunities have of late been afforded, (by the ascendancy which France has obtained in the Ottoman empire,) to disseminate such pernicious tenets. To overthrow the foundations of Mahometanism and expose it in its just colours as the work of fraud and violence, is no very difficult undertaking. The Sophist knows also full well how to insinuate the poison of Scepticism without its influence being immediately perceived. The disciple of Mahomet, therefore, beset by insidious disputants, and unable to "give a reason of the hope that is in him," may well be supposed to fall an easy prey to the "cunning craftiness" of them who "lie in "wait to deceive." The Mussulman, as well as the Jew, will thus become a lover of the new Philosophy; and his faith in the Koran, built on a foundation of sand, will be

swept away, and its place will no where be found.

With respect to the labours of the Prince of darkness in these our days, to spread Apostasy and Impiety through the greater part of Christendom itself, it should seem as if in the agents employed to effect this diabolical purpose, had been concentrated the several qualities which characterised the different opponents of the Gospel in former times. The malice of the Jew, the fury of the Heathen, the fanaticism of the Turk, the coldness, the cunning, and the disingenuity of the Sophist, all appear united in these its modern adversaries: and perhaps nothing less than such a combination of evil dispositions could have produced that vast explosion which, at one time, threatened to lay the whole of Christianity in ruins. But if we were to select any *one* feature in the character of the Conspirators as more prominent than the rest, it would, perhaps, be that of *malignant scoffing*. Ridicule and mockery will operate with thousands, who are incapable of dispassionate Reasoning; and when it became the object of modern Infidels to draw forth the physical strength of the multitude, in order to crush and overwhelm Christianity, they acted with their

accustomed sagacity in resorting to this expedient. Hence, all orders of the community (their principles being shaken, and their reverence for things sacred entirely laid aside) were prepared to cooperate in the dreadful enterprise; so that nothing was wanting but some occasion of violence, to carry it into execution.

But, although the concussion has been tremendous, and the desolation extensive, perhaps, beyond all precedent, Christianity still survives, and defies the Adversary. During the continued series of enormities practised to effect its ruin, bold and strenuous Advocates have every where appeared in its defence. Even in France, amid crowds of "busy mockers," many were the productions of the Gallican clergy, calculated to open the eyes of their fellow-countrymen to the horrible plans that were in agitation, and to unravel the wretched Sophistry which was imposed upon them as Truth. Productions, however, of this kind, whilst they were honourable to their authors, served but to aggravate the crimes of those who resisted conviction, and who were already become "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." But we may trust that they will be read by posterity, when the works that gave occasion to

them have sunk into oblivion; and that they will serve as beacons to future generations, to shew the dangers into which their predecessors had fallen, and to save them from similar ruin.

As to our own Country, we owe an amazing debt of gratitude to that gracious GOD who hath hitherto preserved the Gospel among us in a state of purity and perfection, almost unknown in other parts of the Christian world. For the preservation of this inestimable blessing we are also (under GOD's providence) especially indebted to the pious and exemplary Monarch of this realm;—who, though he ascended the Throne at a season of life when the mind is most easily captivated and led astray; at a time also, when the Anti-Christian Conspiracy was greatly advanced, and when Infidelity had gained an absolute ascendency in almost every Court of Europe;—yet resolutely withstood all temptations from within and from without;—proving himself by his conduct, no less than by his Royal Title, to be truly the DEFENDER of the FAITH.

But while with heartfelt satisfaction we acknowledge our obligations to our justly-revered Sovereign, let us at the same time pay the tribute of well-earned praise to the

many able and strenuous friends of Christianity among our fellow-countrymen, who, in the present day, have distinguished themselves in its defence. Perilous as the times have been, and perilous as they still are, we may confidently trust, that there is not wanting among us a sufficiency of learning, zeal, ability, and sound religious principle, still to form an impregnable bulwark for the Christian Church.

Having thus brought down the *history* of Infidelity to the present time, it only remains, before we enter upon the proposed *argumentative* part of our inquiry, to take a brief retrospect of what has been advanced; to point out the connection of the several parts, as well as the inferences resulting from the whole; and to subjoin some few observations relative to the *future* prospects of the Church, as deducible from Prophecy and from the actual state of mankind. This will be the subject of the ensuing Lecture.

In the mean while, reflecting that we live in times of great danger and perplexity, when "our enemies live and are mighty, "and they that hate us wrongfully are many "in number[m]"—"let us lift up our hearts "with our hands unto God in the heavens[n]"

[m] Ps. xxxviii. 19. [n] Lam. Jer. iii. 41.

unto Him, "who stilleth the raging of the "sea, and the noise of his waves, and the "madness of the people[o]," trusting that he will save us from "the overflowings of un-"godliness" which threaten our destruction, and, amidst the wreck of Establishments, civil and religious, by which we are every where surrounded, will still preserve his Church among us, to be "a praise in the "earth[p]," and a monument of his goodness towards us, to the latest generations!

[o] Ps. lxv. 7. [p] Isa. lxii. 7.

SERMON XII.

MATTHEW xvi. 18.

The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

THE inquiry which has been carried on through the preceding Discourses, has afforded many convincing and melancholy proofs of the strange perverseness of mankind, in rejecting the means of Salvation offered to them by their merciful Creator, and in cooperating with the Evil Spirit to frustrate the gracious purpose of redeeming them from destruction. The representation, however, has not been unmixed with circumstances of the most consolatory nature, such as clearly indicate God's ever-watchful Providence continually interposing to recall his deluded creatures from the error of their ways, and to defeat the malice of their insidious Enemy. Had we, therefore, no other encouragement than that which may be derived from *past* events, it would argue a very culpable want of Faith, to doubt of the final triumph of the Gospel. But (blessed be

God!) we have stronger ground of assurance than this, even the positive and repeated declarations of its Divine Author, that it shall ultimately prevail against all its opponents.

In the very first promise of a Redeemer, it was expressly foretold that though the Seed of the Serpent should bruise *the heel of the Woman's Seed;*—that is, should be the cause of bitter sufferings to the Redeemer himself and to his faithful servants:—yet the Seed of the Woman should bruise *the Serpent's head*, should give a death-blow to his efforts, and finally work his destruction. This promise was evidently intended for the comfort and encouragement of Believers throughout all generations, as well as for the immediate consolation of our first Parents. In subsequent times, renewals of this promise were occasionally vouchsafed, and more distinct revelations given of the means by which it should be fulfilled. To the Patriarchs its purport was gradually unfolded, and illustrated by typical occurrences and emblematical institutions. To the chosen people Israel it was shadowed out in the Sacrifices and other Ceremonials of the Levitical law, and was, indeed, the ground and foundation of the whole Mosaic Dispensation. To the Prophets, and, through them, not only to Judah

and Israel, but to a large portion of the Gentile world, the events by which it was to be accomplished were revealed in a still more distinct and circumstantial manner. The future glories of the Church were also predicted, in imagery so rich and glowing as can only be realized, to the full extent, in times such as never yet have been seen in the brightest days of its prosperity. All these promises relative to the great work of Redemption, and to the ultimate triumph of the Gospel over its opponents, our Blessed Lord hath confirmed and ratified, by the assurance given in the words of the Text, that "the "gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

But notwithstanding these satisfactory grounds of expectation respecting its final issue, the view which has been taken of the contest subsisting between the Redeemer and the Destroyer of Mankind, sets before us incontrovertible evidence that the faithful have an enemy to resist of no less subtlety than malignity, and whom they can only hope to overcome by being "strong in the "Lord, and in the power of His might[q]." Every period of the history of mankind bears testimony to the unceasing and infinitely diversified labours of some such opponent. For,

[q] Ephes. vi. 10.

as the Gospel is to be regarded as one entire system, carried on from the Fall of Adam to the end of the world, yet comprising a variety of Dispensations adapted to the particular exigencies of mankind; so the opposition made to it discovers a striking uniformity of design, and a certain identity of character and principle; although perpetually changing its outward aspect, and adapting itself from time to time, with wonderful versatility, to the actual circumstances of men with respect to religious knowledge.

Now, this seems clearly to indicate some active, though invisible, Mover and Conductor of the whole design: since otherwise we are unable to account for that *systematic* plan of hostility, which we find so unremittingly pursued through every period, and in which agents the most remote from each other as to time and place, and the most dissimilar as to circumstances and character, are made to conspire, as it were, together for the accomplishment of the projected mischief. Moreover, since this hostility betrays evident tokens of a deep-rooted malevolence towards God and Man, it is scarcely conceivable that it should *originate* with Man himself. For, in whatever point of view we contemplate Man, whether in relation to his Creator, or

his Redeemer, it seems so irrational and monstrous to suppose that he would purposely resist the Will of God, or be the author of misery to himself and his fellow-creatures, that we seem unavoidably led to conclude that he must first be *prompted* to such conduct, by the instigation of some other Being, who seeks his destruction.

A brief recapitulation of the history which has been given of the rise and progress of Infidelity, will serve to evince the truth of this conclusion.

It appears to have been the design of man's *Creation* to display the Divine glory and perfections, in the goodness and happiness of a creature capable of natural and moral excellence in a very high degree. But man, by yielding to the suggestions of the Tempter, and transgressing the command of God, brought sin and misery into the world, and was rendered incapable of fulfilling the gracious intention of his Creator. To restore him to a state of favour and acceptance, by providing means for his recovery to life and holiness, was the great purpose of his *Redemption;* a work, which GOD alone could accomplish, and in which every attribute of the Deity was equally conspicuous as in that of Creation itself. What motive, then, could

man possibly have (if uninfluenced by evil suggestions) to oppose the Will either of his Creator or his Redeemer? Or how shall we account for his unbelief and disobedience, either before or after the Fall, unless we suppose him to be urged by a seducing Spirit, full of envy, deceit, and malice, to rush upon his own destruction?

On this point the Holy Scriptures are clear and explicit. They teach us that it is "that "old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, "which deceiveth the whole world[r]." He is described as "the Wicked One," "the Enemy," and "the Tempter" of mankind[s]. He is styled "the God of this world," who "hath "blinded the minds of them which believe "not[t];"—"the Spirit that now worketh in "the children of disobedience[u];"—who "had "the power of death," till Christ "through "death, destroyed him[x];"—whose "working" is "with all power, and signs, and lying won-"ders, and with all deceivableness of unright-"eousness[y];"—who "was a murderer from the "beginning, and abode not in the truth, be-"cause there is no truth in him[z];"—who was "a lying spirit in the mouth of the false Pro-

[r] Rev. xii. 9. [s] Matt. xiii. 19. 39. 1 Thess. iii. 5.
[t] 2 Cor. iv. 4. [u] Eph. ii. 2. [x] Heb. ii. 14.
[y] 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. [z] John viii. 44.

"phets[a];"—who "taketh away the word out "of men's hearts, lest they should believe "and be saved[b];"—and who, "as a roaring "lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may "devour[c]."—"He that committeth sin," is said to be "of the Devil," and they who do "not righteousness are his children[d];"—and it is only by faith and repentance that they "can recover themselves out of the snare of "the Devil, who are taken captive by him at "his will[e]."

Our belief of this important and fundamental truth, thus fully revealed to us in Holy Writ, will be strengthened by considering the variety of errors and falsehoods which mankind have ever been ready to adopt, in their opposition to the Divine will; the causes of which it is scarcely less difficult to explain, without acknowledging, in the first instance, an artful and malevolent Spirit continually seeking to ensnare mankind, than it is to believe that man, uninfluenced by such a Deceiving Power, should wilfully and deliberately be the destroyer of himself. For, as nothing but "strong delusions" could lead him to seek the *end* proposed by his most malignant Enemy, so nothing but a similar

[a] 1 Kings xxii. 22. [b] Luke viii. 12. [c] 1 Pet. v. 8.
[d] 1 John iii. 8. 10. [e] 2 Tim. ii. 26.

delusion could blind him to the tendency of the *means* employed by that Enemy to effect his ruin.

Nevertheless, whenever man is betrayed by the Tempter into either unbelief or unrighteousness, it is through his own willingness to be deceived, and his proneness to transgression, that the temptation is rendered successful. For, the same Scriptures which warn us of the power of the Devil, assure us that if we "resist him he will flee from us[f]," and admonish us not to "give place to him[g]," but to "resist him, steadfast in the Faith[h]." This is necessary to be observed, both for clearing the Divine goodness from any charge of exposing us to *irresistible* temptations, and also for enabling us to take a right view of the guilt and folly of man, in yielding to the suggestions of the Evil One.

In every instance, indeed, of man's apostasy from the truth or opposition to the Divine Will, we may discover evident proofs of the *subtlety* of the Tempter, in working upon those propensities of the human mind which are most favourable to his designs. Hence deceits were practised upon man *after his Fall*, similar to those which had prevailed over him in his *Paradisiacal* state, and with

[f] James iv. 7. [g] Ephes. iv. 27. [h] 1 Peter v. 9.

increased probability of producing the intended effect. For, Man had now a depraved and corrupted nature, more prone than heretofore to be betrayed into evil; although incited to double vigilance by the miseries which he had already incurred, and by gratitude for the mercies which he had already experienced. But the Tempter laboured still to carry on his first deception, that of leading man to consider himself as *independent* of his Creator and Redeemer, capable of working out his Salvation by *his own devices*, and in no wise indebted to GOD for his happiness, either temporal or eternal. To this one point all the stratagems of the Tempter, however incongruous in other respects, appear to have been directed: nor is there, perhaps, any one species of Apostasy or Infidelity, ancient or modern, which is not marked by the prominent features of Pride and Self-sufficiency.

In the earliest periods of man's history, the proofs, though few and indistinct, compared with such as are derived from later periods, are sufficiently evident to establish our general position. It is scarcely possible to doubt that Man was instructed immediately after his Fall in the mystery of Redemption, so far, at least, as was necessary to

enable him to work out his Salvation; and that instituted means were provided for him, by a faithful use of which he might attain to Eternal Life; for "they are not to be heard," (as our Church declares,) "which feign that "the Old Fathers did look only for trans- "itory promises."—In tempting Man, therefore, either to the neglect or to the perversion of these *instituted means*, or in prevailing upon him wholly to renounce that *Faith* on which his title to Redemption depended, we may most reasonably suppose the machinations of the Destroyer to have been employed: and this supposition is strongly confirmed by an attentive consideration of all the principal apostasies from the true God.

The whole system of Pagan Theology, incoherent and irrational as every one must acknowledge it to be, admits not of any explanation so probable as that which resolves it, in the first instance, into *a wilful corruption of Sacred Truth*. For, from whatever period we date the commencement of the system, it must surely *in its origin* have been a direct departure from the *known* will of God: so that however we may be disposed to pity and excuse those who in after-time vainly endeavoured to arrive at a knowledge of the Truth; we seem compelled to admit,

that had not this darkness and ignorance been brought on by an absolute perversion or neglect of the means of Grace and Salvation, the knowledge of the Truth and the way to Life Everlasting could never have been so entirely lost. "Lo, this only have I "found," says Solomon, "that God hath "made man upright; but they have sought "out many inventions." The first man was created upright; and fell, by being persuaded to seek out inventions of his own, rather than adhere to the law of his Creator. His posterity, no longer upright, had yet the way of Salvation pointed out to them; but were tempted in like manner to trust to other expedients; and, yielding to the temptation, "made shipwreck of their faith."

On the promulgation of the Gospel by our Lord and his Apostles, both Jews and Gentiles assailed it with every variety of artifice and violence. But in the Unbelief of each there were aggravations of a peculiar kind. The Jews, as the favoured people of God, had especial opportunities of appreciating more justly than others might be expected to do, the truth and perfection of the Gospel. The Heathen, though destitute of these advantages, had nothing to prejudice their minds against the reception of it,

but an attachment to the grossest fables and absurdities, or to philosophical theories which confessedly had no pretensions to *Divine* authority. The former were inexcusable in rejecting a dispensation for which their own Law and the Prophets were intended to prepare them:—the latter, in withstanding all the powerful Evidences with which it was accompanied, and giving a preference to systems of man's devising, unsupported by testimony or proof of any kind.—*Both* stand convicted of shutting their eyes against the Truth, and of setting up their own perverse prejudices and corrupt imaginations in opposition to the Will of God.

As for the religion of *Mahomet*, nothing can be said to vindicate it against the charge of being wholly founded on arrogance and self-sufficiency. The deluded Mussulman relies indeed on the authority of his pretended Prophet, which he is taught to regard as the authority of Heaven. But in the Koran itself there is the fullest intrinsic evidence of pride and presumption. It provides no atonement for sin, no means of grace; but leaves man to work out his Salvation, without any certainty of deliverance from error, infirmity, corruption, guilt, and death.

In those different kinds of Apostasy, (if such they may be called,) which have been prevalent even among *professors* of the Faith; such as the worship of *many* Mediators rather than one, by the Romanists: the rejection of the Christian Priesthood and Sacraments, by Fanatics; and the perverse systems of Heretics, who deny the personal dignity and the all-sufficient merits of the Redeemer; we may discern the same character of overweening self-opinion, the same disposition to "lean to their own under-"standings[i]," and to trust to any inventions and imaginations of their own, rather than "receive with meekness the engrafted word, "which is able to save their souls[k]."

But all these fall short of the daring presumption of later Infidels, who in their various and contradictory schemes of Scepticism, Deism, or direct Atheism, openly proclaim a determination not to admit any authority as paramount to that of their own reason, even on subjects wholly dependent *on the will of God*.

It is unnecessary to extend this recapitulation to any greater length. Enough has been said, to shew that man has been led into all these errors and absurdities respect-

[i] Prov. iii. 5. [k] James i. 21.

ing the most momentous of concerns, his spiritual and everlasting welfare, *by forsaking God and trusting to himself*. To seduce him to this fatal determination, the efforts of his great Enemy have been invariably directed. The Jew, the Heathen, the Sophist, the Mussulman, the Libertine, the Sceptic, the Deist, and the Atheist, nay, even the Heretic and the Enthusiast, dissimilar as they may be in other respects, all bear resemblance to each other in this prominent feature, that every one is a worshipper of his own imaginations, and will hear no instruction but that which "causeth to err from the words of "knowledge[1]."

But what (it may be asked) is the practical use to be made of this view of Infidelity? or how can it promote the cause of True Religion, thus to represent it as the object of continual opposition and hatred? Nay, does not such a representation of the powerful influence of the Evil Spirit, and of the success of his agents in counteracting God's gracious purposes, rather tend to countenance the impious Manichean notion of two opposite principles, good and evil, by whom the world is distracted? Does it not, at least, give encouragement to Unbelievers,

[1] Prov. xix. 27.

to boast of the effect of their endeavours, and to despise the Faith, as not sufficiently well-grounded to command the assent and veneration of mankind?

To these questions some reply may be deemed necessary.

First, then, with respect to the practical use of such a view of Infidelity it may be observed, that the very existence of the Gospel at this advanced age of the world, after such continued hostility, such a combination of efforts to destroy it, affords a strong presumptive proof of its Divine origin. It seems incredible, that a system so much at unity in itself should have been successfully carried on, under the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian Dispensations, notwithstanding the repeated attacks that were made upon it in every age by Apostates and Unbelievers, unless it had been supported by aid from above.

This argument from the peculiar antiquity and uninterrupted continuance of the Christian scheme, is (as we shall hereafter have occasion more fully to shew) of irresistible force. No other instance of the kind can be produced. No other Religion has pretensions so ancient, has a *genealogy* (if we may so call it) transmitted in so clear

and unbroken a line, as that for which we contend. *Paganism* could not trace back its origin to so remote a date: and Paganism has been for ages destroyed. *Judaism* yields to it in antiquity; and has long since lost its distinctive claims to Divine authority. *Mahometanism* is a religion of yesterday, compared with either of these, and has subsisted only by the power of the Sword or the implicit credulity of its followers. *Philosophical Unbelief*, of whatever antiquity it may boast, can claim no priority to Revealed Religion, by its opposition to which it is chiefly distinguished; standing upon no clearly-defined or duly accredited pretensions of its own. *The Gospel* alone had its birth in the first age of man; hath in some mode or other been ever since preserved to him for his light and consolation; hath at no one period of time left itself without witness of its power and truth; and still rears its head, dauntless and confident of victory, though "pierced through with "many sorrows," and, like its Divine Author, "despised and rejected" of multitudes, to whom it holds out the gracious offer of pardon and salvation.

But farther; in the very opposition which has been made to the Gospel, we behold a striking fulfilment of many Scripture Pro-

phecies. Foremost among these stands the very remarkable prediction accompanying the first promise of the Redeemer; which has this peculiar importance attached to it, that its accomplishment is continually going on through all ages of the world. In after-times many prophecies relating to the posterity of Ham and the descendants of Ishmael; to the overthrow of Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt; to the calamitous dispersion of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem; bore a manifest reference to the idolatries and apostasies of the respective nations to whom they were applied, and received their accomplishment in events which were brought upon those nations, as just judgments of God for their departure from his Faith and Worship. In the New Testament also, and in the Prophet Daniel, are Prophecies descriptive of Antichrist in the latter times. More particularly in the Apocalypse, are predicted the rise, growth, and downfall of the Papal and Mahometan powers, and (according to some interpreters of eminence) not a few remarkable characteristics of the Atheistical Infidelity of the present age. The developement of these portions of History cannot but tend to confirm our belief in Holy Writ, and strengthen the proofs of its Divine authority. We are

hereby enabled to produce a growing evidence for the truth of Revelation, drawn from facts to which all History bears record.

It is further deserving of remark, (as giving additional force to this particular species of evidence in favour of Christianity,) that in each different kind of Apostasy or Infidelity we may perceive some appropriate character, which marks its connection with that particular Dispensation of Revealed Religion under which it took place. Hence it is that counterfeit Religion bears testimony to the true. Paganism throws light on the Patriarchal and Jewish institutions. Mahometanism attests the authority of Moses and of Christ. Infidel Philosophy, when it aspires to instruct us in theological subjects, betrays its obligations to the sacred Oracles of God for whatever it can produce that bears the semblance of Truth; insomuch that the difference between the various systems of what is called Natural Theology before and since the coming of Christ, is evidently the difference between a knowledge of Divine Truths derived from an obscured tradition or an imperfect acquaintance with the Jewish Scriptures, and that more full and accurate knowledge of them which has since been spread among mankind by the publication of the Gospel.

This might be further illustrated by considering the periods of time at which the several systems of False Religion have appeared; and by shewing how inexplicable and unaccountable they would be, were we to invert or misplace the order of their appearance. What, for instance, could be more inconceivable, than that such a system as the ancient *Paganism* should spring up anew and prevail, *in the present day*, in any nation upon earth? And why so, but because it is inconceivable that any such system should be constructed without *materials* wherewith to frame it, similar to those which the Heathen of old borrowed from Patriarchal and Jewish rites? What progress, again, can we suppose that the Religion of *Mahomet* would have made, had it come forth in the zenith of Grecian or Roman Power? or how would it *now* adapt itself, as a new system, to the state of civilisation and knowledge in Christian countries? Precisely at the time when it arose, and at that time only, was it calculated to succeed, from a concurrence of events, political and religious, favourable in all respects to the views of its Founders. In like manner, it might not be difficult to shew that, in all ages of the world, the progressive variations in Error and Falsehood have run

parallel with the progressive state of True Religion; so as clearly to indicate the constant operation of a Deceiving Spirit, prosecuting one invariable purpose, that of frustrating God's gracious designs towards fallen man, and, under every Dispensation of the Divine Will, suggesting new modes of delusion, according to the peculiar circumstances and condition of mankind.

As to the supposition, that this view of the subject, by ascribing so extensive and powerful an influence to the Evil Spirit, may favour the impious notions of the *Manichees;* the objection strikes directly at Scripture itself, wherein the doctrine of an Evil Spirit holding an unceasing contest with the Redeemer is clearly taught. But this doctrine, rightly understood, is widely different from that of Manicheism; notwithstanding the labours of infidel and heterodox writers to confound the one with the other. The Manichean heresy maintains that there is an Evil Principle in the Universe coeval and coequal with God himself. But the Scriptures nowhere give countenance to such an opinion. They instruct us concerning this Wicked One, not that he was originally created evil, nor that he was self-existent, but that he was created of an angelical

nature, and was cast down from his exalted station and dignity in punishment of his rebellion against the Most High. We can be at no loss, therefore, for a clear line of distinction between the *Scriptural* representation of the Evil Spirit, and that wild and impious notion which prevailed among many *Heathen* nations, and which afterwards characterised the followers of *Manes*. The *fall* of this rebellious Spirit from his original state of dignity and happiness, is a decisive proof of his *impotence* in comparison with the Almighty. It implies also that he was previously *in favour with God;* and thus shews that he was not *originally* of an *evil nature*. The Scriptures, therefore, are not chargeable with the blasphemous and frightful doctrine, that God is the Author of Evil, in any sense derogatory to his perfections; or that there is any independent or self-existent Being, capable of frustrating or opposing the will and purposes of the Creator. That the Prince of the Fallen Angels should abuse his faculties, rebel against his Maker, and, being doomed in consequence to degradation and misery, should exercise his rage and malice in endeavouring to draw others into the same condemnation, is no more incredible in itself, than (what every day's experience sets before

us) the effect of pride and perverseness upon the *human* heart, in producing an almost equal degree of malignity and infatuation. And whatever extent of mischief may seem to be occasioned by the ravages of this implacable Adversary, we have still a full and perfect assurance given us in the very same Scriptures, that God will enable us to become "more "than conquerors through him that loved "us[m];" that he hath built his Church upon a Rock; and that "the gates of Hell shall "not prevail against it."

With respect to any apprehensions, therefore, that it may be injurious to Revealed Religion, to detail (as has been done in the present instance) the numbers and strength of its Adversaries, or that Unbelievers may be encouraged by such a representation of the talents and exertions heretofore employed against it, to boast of their success and to despise the Faith for which we contend; we reply, that no such consequences need be feared; more especially, when we consider that numbers and strength afford no certain criterion of Truth, and that the greatest talents and ingenuity give no absolute security against the wiles of the Tempter. On the contrary, it is too often found, that these

[m] Rom. viii. 37.

having a tendency to generate pride and self-sufficiency greatly facilitate his designs. Hence the Apostle says, that "not many wise, "not many mighty[n]," received the Gospel, when it was first preached; and succeeding ages have but too frequently given cause for a similar observation. Nevertheless, if we were to take a fair and impartial view of the success of Christianity among those to whom it has been offered in its genuine purity and perfection, it would by no means appear that a majority of the most enlightened and well-informed men have been so perverse as to reject it. We might safely challenge a scrutiny, at any particular period of Ecclesiastical History, into the *characters* of the persons who have opposed the Gospel, and those who have come forward in its defence; from which scrutiny, we are confident, it would appear that a great majority of those whose moral as well as intellectual endowments best qualified them to decide, are to be found on the list of its most strenuous advocates: I say, *moral* endowments, because these are at least equally necessary, if not more so, to enable a man to judge of the claims of Revealed Religion, as the highest and rarest *intellectual* abilities; nothing being more consonant with reason than our Blessed Lord's declaration, that "if

[n] 1 Cor. i. 26.

"any man will *do his will*, he shall know of "the *doctrine* whether it be of God." But perhaps we are contending unnecessarily for this point; since our Adversaries will hardly wish, when they recollect the distinguished names that in every age have adorned the Christian profession, to suffer its claims to be decided by the comparative merits of its friends and its opponents.

Having thus endeavoured to remove such objections as are most likely to be made to the view which has here been taken of the subject, it only remains briefly to inquire into what is revealed in Scripture respecting the *future* condition of the Christian Church.

Whatever encouragement we might derive, from reflecting upon the proofs which have hitherto been afforded of a Divine Providence constantly interposing for the preservation of the Church of God; we could not, perhaps, from such proofs only, draw any certain conclusions as to its future success. For these we must be exclusively indebted to that "sure word of Pro-"phecy," which though, as long as it remains unfulfilled, it can only serve as "a light "that shineth in a dark place[o]," will yet be amply sufficient for our instruction and consolation, provided we "take heed" to it with

[o] 2 Peter i. 19.

humility, reverence, and a cautious fear of misinterpretation.

It appears, even on a cursory examination of the Scripture Prophecies relating to the last times, that there are several important events yet to take place, previous to that period when the Son, having subdued all things unto himself, shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. The "things "yet to come" before the Millennium, or reign of the Saints on earth, (according to the Visions of the Apocalypse, and other intimations in Holy Writ,) are the destruction of the Eastern and the Western Antichrist, the death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses, and the conversion and restoration of the Jews. It seems not improbable that these events will *synchronize*, or nearly so, with each other.

The reign of Antichrist is evidently not yet extinct, either in the East or in the West. At what period the 1260 years of its continuance will be accomplished, is not, perhaps, exactly to be ascertained; although, according to the computation of the most approved commentators, it may not be very distant. The present political aspect of affairs, so far as relates to the Papal See and the Ottoman Empire, indicates its decay,

and favours the expectation of its rapid dissolution.

The *Witnesses*, who were to "prophesy "1260 years clothed in sackcloth," undoubtedly synchronize with the reign of Antichrist. Whether we understand by them the two great branches of the Christian Church, spreading through the Eastern and Western Empires, and professing the Faith in opposition to Infidels; or, whether we suppose them to denote, in the West, the Protestant Churches witnessing against Papal Rome, and in the East, the Greek Churches bearing testimony against Mahometans and Pagans; in either case, it is evident that they still continue to uphold the cause of Truth against its enemies, mourning for their perverseness and hardness of heart. The sufferings which these remnants of the Faithful have oftentimes undergone, in the discharge of this sacred duty, are recorded in characters of blood. But what may be their figurative death and resurrection, predicted in the Revelation; what new persecutions they may yet be called upon to endure at the hands of Infidels and Apostates; and how they may be restored to life and strength, after an apparently total extinction for a little space; we know not. There

seems, however, much greater reason to regard this part of the Apocalyptic Vision as yet to come, than as already past. Whatever therefore, may be our desire and our endeavours to effect the overthrow of Antichrist, and to accelerate the coming of our Lord's pure and spiritual kingdom upon earth; we must not suppose that it will be effected without much tribulation; such, perhaps, as hath never yet been experienced. But we are authorized, from the predicted *Resurrection* of these Witnesses, to look forward with patient confidence to the final result of the conflict; knowing that into whatever disasters the Church may be plunged, she will emerge with renewed strength and beauty; God being "well known in her palaces "as a sure refuge[p]."—We have likewise reason to hope that, "for the elect's sake," the days of her tribulation will "be shortened[q];" and that the trial of the faithful, though severe, will be "but for a moment," and then work for them "an eternal weight of glory."

To another great event we are taught likewise to look forward, namely, the conversion of the Jews to the Faith of Christ, and their reinstatement as the favoured people of God. That those who have for so

[p] Ps. xlviii. 2. [q] Matt. xxiv. 22.

many ages resisted the strongest evidences of the Gospel, and shewn themselves to be its bitterest and most unrelenting Adversaries, should yield in the last days to the force of conviction, and even become, (as seems to be foretold,) not only depositaries of the true Faith, but the most active and successful instruments in the conversion of others; may by the Unbeliever be regarded as an idle dream. Nevertheless, as it is almost impossible not to perceive the hand of God in the strange vicissitudes that have hitherto befallen that wonderful people; so is it hardly to be doubted that they are thus miraculously preserved for some astonishing and greatly beneficial purpose, yet to be accomplished. That no clear indications have hitherto appeared of a disposition on their part to acknowledge the truth of the Gospel, does not furnish a solid objection against this well-grounded expectation. For, besides that we know not how long it may be before this great event shall happen, nor what favourable circumstances shall arise to hasten its arrival, it is obvious to remark that to the Omnipotent Ruler of the Universe means of effecting such a purpose can never be wanting. Whether it shall be gradually effected by the ordinary course of human agency:

or whether (as the learned and sagacious Mede[q] has conjectured) the Jewish nation, like their great Prototype, St. Paul, after "breathing out threatenings and slaughters" against Christians for so long a time, shall be suddenly and miraculously converted to the truth; is a point not to be determined by any express predictions of Holy Writ. None, however, but an Atheist, will deny that with God all this is possible; and that thus to raise the spiritually dead to life and restore these lost members to the Church, is equally within the compass of his power as literally to reunite the soul to the body, to give sight to the blind, or to infuse fresh vigour into the limbs of the paralytic. Nothing, at least, is more certain than that the Scriptures clearly foretell the conversion and restoration of the Jews, and that a most satisfactory pledge of the fulfilment of those predictions is already given, by what has actually been brought to pass in their dispersion and preservation.

Respecting the Millennium, or reign of the Saints on Earth for a thousand years, after these events shall have taken place, there is room for great variety of conjecture. Whether, with the earlier fathers of the Chris-

[q] See Mede's Works, book 5. chap. 2.

tian Church and some eminent Expositors of modern times, we are to expect that a Resurrection and Triumph of the Saints shall precede the general and final Resurrection; or whether we hold, with others, that it is not to be a reign of persons raised from the dead, but a renovated state of the Church flourishing gloriously for one thousand years, after the conversion of the Jews and the flowing in of all nations to the Christian Faith; it is not necessary to determine. The former interpretation seems to offer the least violence to the language of Scripture; and is supported by great Authorities. But our trust in the promises of God depends not on the determination of this question; since, whichsoever interpretation we adopt, the splendid predictions of the inspired Writers both in the Old and New Testament will doubtless be verified, either in a literal or in a figurative acceptation, to their fullest extent. In the mean time, the condition of the Church, antecedently to that its triumphant state, may reasonably be expected to exhibit a diversified scene of trial and victory, of peril and deliverance, of depression and recovery, similar to what it has hitherto undergone.

After the advancement of the Church to its triumphant state, it is predicted that the

great Adversary (having been bound for one thousand years) shall be again loosed, and permitted to make one further effort against the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ; in which he will be aided by the last enemies of the Christian Church, whom he shall deceive to their destruction[r]. But the attempt, however terrible in its circumstances, will end in the total and final overthrow of Satan and his agents. After this, the general Resurrection and Judgment are to follow. "A "new heaven and a new earth[s]" are to be created, for the habitation of the blessed. "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, "and they shall gather out of his kingdom "all things that offend, and them which do "iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace "of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing "of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine "forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their "Father[t]."

Thus, through the power of the Redeemer, shall the whole scheme of Prophecy from the beginning to the end of the world be fulfilled; and the first gracious promise to Adam and his posterity, as well as the sentence denounced against them, be accomplished

[r] Rev. xx. 7, &c. [s] Rev. xxi. 1. [t] Matt. xiii. 41.

in its completest sense. After the rage and malice of the Destroyer shall have been exerted, throughout all ages, to "bruise the "heel" of the Messiah, and his most insidious efforts employed to overthrow his kingdom; that very Messiah, "the Seed of the Woman," shall "bruise the Serpent's *head;*" and he shall fall, to rise no more.

It is unnecessary, and, perhaps, in vain, to speculate further on these awful subjects. Sufficient is it for us to know that, at whatever period or by whatever means the kingdom of Christ is finally to be established, the opposition of the Enemy until that period will certainly be unceasing. Never, therefore, let us forget that while we are members of the Church-Militant here on earth, we must "take unto us the whole armour of God, "that we may be able to withstand in the "evil day, and having done all, to stand[u]." Let us not suppose, with the superficial theorists of the age, that these latter times are times of marvellous improvement in the knowledge of Religious Truth; or that they are less pregnant with danger and mischief than those which are past. Our best exertions, our most zealous and unceasing efforts, are becoming more and more requisite, to resist the

[u] Ephes. vi. 13.

torrent of iniquity and impiety, of error and delusion, which is every day pouring in upon us: and miserably shall we be deceived, if, trusting to the supposed advancement of the human mind towards a state of perfection, or to any imagined abatement of rage and malice on the part of the Adversary, we relax our efforts, or relinquish our salutary suspicions. There is, perhaps, more than common need for these admonitions at the present moment; since there never was a period when the Enemy with more inveterate malignity sought the ruin of the Church, or laboured to compass it with more consummate artifice and deceit.

Let us go on, then, with steadiness and vigilance; "giving place by subjection" to the Enemy, "no, not for an hour; that the "truth of the Gospel may continue with us[x]." Every hope which we can reasonably entertain of being still blessed with the possession of the Gospel, must depend on our constantly acting like men who know and consider that we have such an Enemy to contend with; whose hostility will never cease, until God shall bind him in chains. At present, he is the "raging and roaring lion going about "seeking whom he may devour;" and in

[x] Gal. ii. 5.

every part of the world his ravages are apparent. It is our's, therefore, to "fight the good "fight of Faith," that we may "lay hold on "eternal Life.[y]" It is our's to combat against all the enemies of the Gospel, and to vindicate it openly both by our profession and our practice. It is our's, in assured hope and expectation of the accomplishment of those glorious prophecies which foretell the coming of our Lord in majesty and honour, to use our most strenuous endeavours for the enlargement of his kingdom now on earth, and to pray for its full and final establishment. May God, in his good time, fulfil these his gracious promises to the Universal Church; and, in the mean while, grant to that branch of it which his own right-hand hath planted in this land, strength and vigour to flourish under all the storms of adversity, and to be a living instance of his mercy and truth, till time shall be no more!

[y] 1 Tim. vi. 12.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX

TO

VOLUME I.

SERMON I.

P. 2. l. 4. *The origin of evil.*] The learned Fabricius, in his work de Veritate Rel. Chr. cap. 15. (4to. 1731) gives a copious list of writers who distinguished themselves in the controversies respecting the opinions of Bayle, Leibnitz, and Wolfe, on this perplexing subject: concerning the difficulty of which, he thus, in the beginning of the chapter, delivers his own sentiments:—"Celso Epicureo affirmanti naturam mali et originem difficilè cognosci ab iis qui Philosophiæ non dant operam, rectè respondet Origenes, ortum malorum ne à Philosophis quidem facilè, ac prorsus non posse intelligi, nisi ab iis qui Divino favore adspirante didicerint quomodo malum per abusum libertatis et rationis in dæmonibus et hominibus sumserit initium, et quomodo per Dei gratiam effugi ac declinari debeat. Profectò videmus quotquot, ab hâc Divinâ luce recedentes, ausi sunt propriis viribus rem hanc penetrare, neque acquiescere voluerunt illis, quæ vel sensus communis dictat de Dei bonitate ac libertate hominis, vel sacræ litteræ etiam in illis capitibus sensui communi suffragantes, præterea de peccato ejusque origine nos edocent; omnes illos nihil egisse hactenus, et dubiis sese involuisse inextricabilibus, à centro veritatis autem lineæ spiralis in modum, longiùs semper longiúsque recessisse." Bp. Stillingfleet, in like manner, commends the saying of Origen in his reply to Celsus, and largely sets forth the difficulties of the subject, and the variety of confused and inconsistent notions of it among the Heathen. Orig. Sacr. b. iii. c. 3. (fol. 1709. 2 vols. 8vo. 1836.)

Dr. Gurdon (in his Boyle's Lect. serm. 5. 1721–22.) shews the absurdity of the Atheist in rejecting Religion on account of the irreconcilableness of evil with a Being of infinite goodness; and closes with this remark, that

when the Unbeliever "exchanges *Religion* for *Atheism*, if he deals fairly with himself, he will only find this difference, that whereas he stumbled at some appearances of evil which he could not reconcile with goodness or the existence of a Good Principle, he must now see every solution he can give of this *phænomenon* upon the foot of *Atheism*, plainly impossible to be the Truth."

Dr. Berriman, after stating the difficulty of framing any satisfactory hypothesis on this subject without the help of Revelation, says, "How, then, is this difficulty cleared up by *Revelation?* Not by any nice and philosophical deductions, but by a plain and rational account of *Fact*, sufficient to preserve the honour of God, and the influences of Religion. We have a plain account of the Temptation and Apostasy of man; from which we learn, that Sin was introduced by the abuse of Liberty; that the creature, which had freedom of will, in order to make it capable of virtue, did voluntarily abuse it into an occasion of vice; that the first author and promoter of Sin was himself the creature of God, and subject to his government. So that there is neither any room to charge God with being the author of sin, nor yet to suppose a distinct and independent Principle of Evil; since liberty of will, which is itself a valuable privilege, and without which there could properly be no virtue, so that it must have been worse with mankind to have wanted it, has yet put it in the creature's power to be guilty of Vice. And if this does not entirely solve all the difficulties in speculation, yet it solves them enough for the direction of our practice, and to preserve a religious fear and reverence for God. If our modern Infidels should pretend to found the same answer upon principles of *Nature*, yet the defects of ancient Philosophy are sufficient to convince us they never could have done so without the help of *Revelation;* and even still, unless we do admit or presuppose the authority and truth of such *Revelation*, their solution, at the best, must be but wavering and doubtful, and cannot be received without great uncertainty and diffidence. For who shall assure us of the reality of such original liberty, and the actual abuse of it by a voluntary disobedience, if we have no authentic history remaining of the fact, nor its memory preserved by the concurrent doctrine and tradition of succeeding times? By looking into ourselves, we may perceive some degree of liberty, but not without a great deal of bias and inclination to Sin; so that the difficulty can never be cleared up, without supposing Man to be created at first in a more perfect state: and the assurance of this is to be

had only from revealed Religion." Boyle Lect. serm. I. (1730–32.)

Abp. King, in his elaborate Essay on the Origin of Evil, wherein he endeavours to prove, by arguments *à priori* drawn from the nature of God and the true notion of created beings, that the existence of Evil, both natural and moral, could not have been originally avoided, and that the very permission of them, in the present state of things, proves the infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the Deity, confesses nevertheless, with respect to the corruption of mankind and their almost universal deviation from the way to happiness, that it is "better solved from Revealed than Natural Religion; and that the necessity of a *Revelation* is from hence rightly proved. For, since the true cause which gave rise to this is a matter of *Fact*, viz. the Fall of the first Man, it cannot be discovered merely by the strength of Reason; but we stand in need of *Historical* Tradition, to transmit this, as well as other matters of Fact, down to us." Ch. v. sect. 5. subject 6. (De Origine Mali, 8vo. 1702; translated by E. Law, 4to. 1731.)

"As the origin of Evil" (says the late venerable Mr. Jones of Nayland) "is a question which has tortured the wits of men in all ages, let this consideration satisfy us, that God has *permitted evil*, for the sake only of *greater good*: that his attributes and Divine powers could never have been understood and admired by us, if they had not been opened by that scheme of Redemption, in which *mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*. Never let us torment ourselves with asking the question, Could not God have prevented the fall of man?—Thus the Jews ignorantly reasoned about the death of Lazarus, *Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man should not have died?* To be sure he could: but the glory of God, and the instruction of mankind, were better secured by his death, than they could have been by his preservation. Therefore Christ said of his sickness, *This sickness is not unto death*; it hath not happened that death may be at the end of it, *but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby*. Lazarus died, that Jesus might raise him up: and Man is fallen, that God may be glorified in his restoration. Here every wise and good man will rest; this consideration is sufficient for us at present; and as for those deep counsels of God into which we are not now able to penetrate, let us trust, that they will be further revealed to us in a better state. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done*

away." *Essay on Man.* Jones's Works, vol. vii. p. 300. (12 vols. 8vo. 1801.)

P. 8. l. 8. *A developement of the rise and progress of the contest therein foretold, cannot but strengthen our confidence in the truth of the Christian Revelation.*] Mr. Jones remarks, in his *Preservative against Socinianism*, "that if spiritual wickedness were but rightly understood, as it subsists in the Devil, the original of it all, men could never be cheated, as they now are, with the plausible speeches of those who lie in wait to deceive them." In the *Essay on Man*, above quoted, he has the following observations: "The Fall of Man, and the consequent depravity of human nature, should never be out of sight, when we attempt to justify the Christian scheme, or undertake to explain any Christian doctrines. The Bible begins with it professedly; pointing out the wiles of the Devil, and bringing in the Saviour for no other end but to counterwork the Destroyer in his two great works of *Sin* and *Death*. They who remain in the state in which the Fall left them, are called his children; and it is their pleasure to propagate that sin and death which their father introduced. As he was a liar from the beginning, so they are liars, against God as well as man; he was a murderer, and they are murderers; he was a tempter, a deceiver, a subtle serpent, a devouring lion; and their works, like his, abound with deceit, enmity, subtilty, avarice, and rapacity. There have been two opposite parties from the beginning, *the sons of God*, and *the seed of the Serpent*. Their opinions are contrary, and their works contrary. Christianity is at the head of one party, and Infidelity at the head of the other. As time is divided between light and darkness, so is the world between these two. The dispute between them has subsisted through all ages past, it is now in agitation, and it grows hotter every day: it will never cease, till the consummation, when the Judge of men and angels shall interpose to decide it." Jones's Works, vol. vii. p. 294. The same author has given a spirited sketch of this contest, in *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, containing some seasonable Cautions against Errors in Doctrine.* See his Works, vol. i. p. 249—260. See also Mede's Works, disc. 42. (folio, 1672.) and Dr. Gerard's Sermons, vol. i. p. 71. (2 vols. 8vo. 1780-82.)

SERMON II.

P. 24. l. 11. *The sin of the fallen Angels.*] "We have little or no account in the Scriptures of the cause or

temptation, which occasioned the fall of Angels, because it doth not concern us to be inquisitive about it. Indeed, it is very difficult to conceive, how beings of so great knowledge and purity, as the fallen Angels once were of, should fall into sin. But it must be considered, that nothing is more unaccountable than the motives and causes of action in free agents. When any being is at liberty to do as it will, no other reason of its actings, besides its own will, need be inquired for. What is liable to Sin, may sin, whatever the motive be; and to inquire after the motive, is to inquire what motives may determine a free agent, that is, an agent which may determine itself upon any ground or motive. But how perfect and excellent soever any creature is, unless it be so confirmed and established in a state of purity and holiness, as to be secured from all possibility of sinning, it may be supposed to admire itself, and dote upon its own perfections and excellencies, and by degrees to neglect, and not acknowledge God the author of them, but to sin and rebel against him. And it is most agreeable both to Scripture and Reason, that *Pride* was the cause of the Fall of Angels. For those excellencies which might secure them from any other sin, proved a temptation to this; and the greater their perfections were, the greater was the temptation." Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion, vol. ii. ch. 13. (2 vols. 8vo. 1734.) See also Leslie's Serm. on Sin and Heresy. (Works, 2 vols. folio, 1721.) Hooker's Eccl. Pol. b. i. sect. 4. Wheatly's Sermons, vol. iii. serm. xi. xii. (3 vols. 8vo. 1746.)

P. 26. l. 20. *The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life.*] Abp. King, in a Sermon on the Fall of Man, reprinted at the end of the 3d edition of his Essay on the Origin of Evil, has the following observations: "We must remember that God in all his intercourses with men has constantly made use of some visible or outward means, and that it is reasonable it should be so. For since Man has a body as well as a soul; senses as well as understanding; and that the soul does make use of the organs of the body and of the senses for its information; and that this is the natural course of our acquiring knowledge; it were a violence to the nature of man, to invert the method, or separate the one from the other. And therefore God in his communications with us seems industriously to have avoided it."—"Now this being the manner of God's entertaining an intercourse with Man through the whole Scriptures, it is very evident that the two remarkable trees of Paradise, that of Life and this of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, were designed for these mystical pur-

poses, and intended as settled and visible means to supply man with God's influence and assistance in those cases in which he could want them. For, 1st, Man might be at a loss how to preserve his body from decays to which it was naturally subject; and 2dly, how to direct his actions. For the first of these God appointed the Tree of Life. Not that any Tree by any natural virtue could preserve us immortal: but since God commanded man to eat of it as often as he needed to be restored in his body, he surely was ready and able to convey his supernatural assistance to him by it, and make it effectual to the design for which it was appointed. Man's eating, therefore, of it with Faith and in Obedience to God, was the signal upon which the Divine power was pleased to exert itself for the restoration of him to his primitive vigour. And as God provided for the preservation of his Body by the Tree of Life, so he likewise provided for his Soul, and taught him how to govern it, by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and this he was not to eat, nor to touch it. By which was signified unto him, that he was not to pretend in any way to judge what was good or evil for him; but on all occasions to have recourse to God, and entirely to resign and trust himself to the Divine conduct. Thus, as it was by the declaration of God certain Death to eat of this Tree, on account of its being a symbol of the immediate dependence on his Maker for the distinguishing of what was good and evil for him; so he was not to trust to his own understanding for the determining of these, but to have recourse to God without further concerning himself about them."—"You may see then from this, that God did not think it fit that Man should be absolutely happy in the state of Innocency without *Revealed Religion*, and the use of *Sacraments*. For the discovery of what was good and evil was to proceed from a continued communication of Divine Wisdom, which would have been equivalent to a Revelation: and the Trees of Knowledge and of Life were truly Sacramental; they were outward and visible signs, and means of Grace, which is the true notion of a Sacrament." P. 59, 60, 61. 79. See also Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion, vol. ii. ch. 13. Bp. Seabury's Discourses, vol. i. disc. 10. part ii. p. 243. 252. Bp. Horne's Sermons, vol. i. (3 vols. 8vo. 1803.) Daubeny's Eight Discourses, p. 294. (8vo. 1802.) Shuckford on the Creation and Fall, (8vo. 1753.) Raleigh's History of the World, b. i. ch. 4.

P. 29. l. 18. *The system of Redemption was shadowed out to them, in the religious services which they were re-*

quired to perform.] This seems also probable from St. Paul's speaking of the Patriarchs as "walking by *Faith;*" and from our Lord's remarkable expression concerning Abraham, He "rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."—See Heidegger. Hist. Patriarch. exercit. 3. (2 vols. 4to. 1729.)

P. 30. l. 14. *No reason so probable can be assigned for the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice and the rejection of Cain's*, &c.] "Sacrifice," says Bp. Sherlock, "is the first *act* of *Religion* mentioned in the Sacred Story to be *accepted* by God: which implies strongly that it was of his own appointment; for we can hardly suppose that such a mark of distinction would have been set upon a mere *human* invention. In later times, when the account of things grows clearer, Sacrifice appears to be appointed by God as an *expiation for sin*; and we have no reason to imagine that it was turned aside from its original use. There is indeed no express declaration of the *use* of Sacrifice in Religion, at its first appearance, and yet something there seems to be in the account, that may give light in this matter. We read that *Cain* brought *an offering of the fruit of the ground*, and *Abel of the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof: the Lord had respect unto* Abel *and to his offering; but unto* Cain *and to his offering he had not respect.* Allowing the maxim of the *Jewish* Church to have been good from the first institution of Sacrifice, *that without blood there is no remission*, the case may possibly be this: *Abel* came a petitioner for grace and pardon, and brought the *atonement* appointed for sin; *Cain* appears before God as a *just person wanting no repentance*, he brings an *offering* in acknowledgment of God's goodness and bounty, but no *atonement* in acknowledgment of his own wretchedness. The expostulation of God with *Cain* favours this account; *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door:* i. e. If thou art righteous, thy righteousness shall save thee; if thou art not, by what expiation is thy sin purged? It lieth still at thy door. Add to this, that the Apostle to the Hebrews says, that *Abel's Sacrifice* was rendered excellent by *Faith:* what could this Faith be, but a reliance on the promises and appointments of God? Which Faith *Cain* wanted, relying on his own well-doing." Bp. Sherlock on Prophecy, disc. 3. p. 73, third edition.

Dr. Glocester Ridley, in a Sermon on *the Origin and Use of Sacrifice*, (text Gen. iv. 4, 5,) has the following observations: "*The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not*

respect. Whence could this difference proceed? We see no grounds for it, but that *Abel* offered an animal, and *Cain* the fruits of the ground. Yet this very difference in the sacrifices seems to imply the same principle in the sacrificers, that of gratitude to God for their respective blessings. But the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews throws great light upon this passage, when he says, *By* FAITH *Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.* Hence it is plain, that though *Cain's* first fruits might signify his *gratitude*, *Abel's* animal testified his *faith.* But what was that *faith?* The author defines it in the first verse of that chapter, *as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* And his instances relate, either to a trust in the promises of God, or a belief of his testimony. So that *Abel*, when he offered of the firstlings of his flock, declared, either his confidence in some promise which God had made, or his belief in some truth which God had revealed. And if God had promised, that he would remit sins through the prevailing merit of a Sacrifice in due time to be offered, and, in token and pledge of the promise, instituted bloody sacrifices for present atonement; then the offering these sacrifices was an instance of faith in that promise." On the expostulation with Cain, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door;* Dr. R. remarks, that "the word rendered *sin* does often signify *an offering for sin*, and that the passage may be thus interpreted: Knowest thou not, that if thou discharge thy duty fully, thou shalt be accepted? And that if thou failest therein, through human infirmities, I have provided a remedy, in appointing a sacrifice and atonement for sin? *Abel* applied the atonement, and is received. Thy not doing the same, must proceed from a confidence in thy own merits, or a distrust of my promise. No other reason can be assigned: for the sacrifice appointed was no difficult thing to find, it even *coucheth* before thy door, (the word is particular, and denotes the posture of beasts,) it is not of the wild race that shun mankind, but of those tame ones that even wait upon thee for their subsistence, and are entirely in thy power. In this view, *Cain* appears conceited of his own works, and brings his thanksgiving offering, like the Pharisee, who prayed thus: *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are;* while *Abel* humbly acknowledged his unworthiness, and brings the appointed atonement, like the publican praying, *God, be merciful to me a sinner:* accordingly *Abel*, like the *publican, departed justified rather than the other.* As I think this is a consistent interpretation of this diffi-

cult passage; so, if admitted, it is a full proof of the Divine Institution of sacrifices to atone for sins." *The Christian Passover, in four Sermons on the Lord's Supper*, by Gloucester Ridley, 1742, p. 14.

Dr. Edmund Law (late Bp. of Carlisle) in his *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, remarks, concerning the distinction made between *Abel's* offering and that of *Cain*, that it "cannot be accounted for otherwise than by the interposition of God, nor that remarkable interposition solved on other principles than *Cain's* presuming to omit the prescribed *victim*, through his want of *Faith*, Heb. xi. 4. Otherwise his portion of the fruits of the ground might well appear to be as just and natural a tribute of devotion from one in his province, as some part of the flock was from his brother: as we have not the least intimation of any other difference in the sincerity of their dispositions, whereon to ground the above distinctions between them." Note p. 60, 2d edition, (8vo. 1765.)

Mr. Hingeston, in his *Discourses upon the Divine Covenants*, treats this subject at large, and is of opinion, that "Cain rejected the doctrine of a Redeemer, or treated it with disregard;"—and, "that Abel offered a bloody sacrifice, in obedience to Divine direction, expressive of his faith in Christ; declaring in expressive terms his trust in the atonement to be made by the promised Redeemer." Disc. ix. p. 136. 140.

See also Cloppenburg. Schol. Sacrific. Patriarch. p. 15. —Heideggeri Hist. Patriarch. tom. i. exercit. 5. §. 22. Pfeifferi Exercit. de Colloquio Kaini et Abelis. Oper. tom. i. p. 516. (2 vols. 4to. 1704,) in which are quoted the opinions of Luther and Calovius to the same effect. Bp. Seabury also has ably discussed the subject, in a sermon on Gen. iv. 3, 4, &c. vol. i. disc. 11. For a still more full investigation of it, the reader is referred to two most important and valuable discourses on *the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice*, by Dr. Magee of Trinity College, Dublin, 8vo. 1801, particularly from p. 53 to p. 60, and in the notes from p. 347 to p. 370.

P. 32. l. 10. *There are not wanting good authorities for supposing that idolatry was introduced by the posterity of Cain,—and even by Cain himself.*] "Quæ de Deo fuerit sententia Cainitarum, disputatur inter eruditos. Hebræi plerique, quin et Christiani tum veteres tum recentiores non pauci, inter Cainitas viguisse πολυθεότητα et idololatriam nulli dubitant: quod à multis tamen scriptoribus tam antiquis quàm recentioribus negatur; tum quia nulla ejus rei expressa sit mentio apud Mosen, quo argumento

utitur Cyrillus Alexandrinus contra Julianum; tum quia celebratissima et recentissima fuerit unius Dei creatoris memoria, quæ ratio est Thomæ. Nihilominùs prior illa sententia, quæ idololatriam inter Cainitas receptam statuit, haud obscurè ex Mose colligitur, et aliunde etiam confirmari potest." Heideggeri Hist. Patriarch. tom. i. exercit. 8. §. 2. p. 163. The whole of this dissertation, which is entitled "De Theologiâ Cainitarum et Idololatriâ Antediluvianâ," is well deserving of attention. Dr. Henry Owen, in his Boyle's Lect. refers to this work of Heidegger, and quotes some other authorities to the same effect. Vol. i. p. 113 et seq. (2 vols. 8vo. 1773.) See also Raleigh's Hist. of the World, b. i. ch. 6. Tenison on Idolatry, ch. 4. Hingeston on the Covenants, disc. 10.

P. 33. l. 24. *Ham, the youngest son of Noah*, &c.] Concerning the impiety of Ham, see Owen's B. Lect. vol. i. p. 162. Worthington's B. Lect. vol. i. disc. 7. p. 304 to 308. (2 vols. 8vo. 1766–68.) Tenison ut suprà, ch. 4.

P. 34. l. 13. *The building of the Tower of Babel*, &c.] "The author of this scheme was Nimrod, the grandson of Ham; whom the Scripture styles in our version, "a mighty hunter *before* the Lord:" but some of the ancient interpreters of Scripture, "a mighty rebel *against* the Lord." That he was indeed a "rebel," his very *name* implies; and that his rebellion consisted principally in Idolatry, is the general suffrage of all antiquity. See Owen's B. Lect. serm. vii. p. 165—174, with the authorities there referred to: also Delany's Revel. examined, (3 vols. 8vo. 1735) vol. ii. disc. 3. Heidegger. tom. i. exercit. 21. Bryant's Mythology, vol. iii. p. 45. Holwell's Mythol. Dictionary, p. 65 and 248. Charles on the Dispersion at Babel, sect. 13. (2 vols. 8vo. 1769.) Tenison, ut suprà, ch. 4. Worthington's B. Lect. vol. i. p. 340–344. Law's Theory of Religion, p. 76. Worthington's Essay on Redemption, ch. vi. p. 121.

P. 36. l. 12. *The wonders performed in the land of Egypt.*] Mr. Bryant's admirable work, on the Plagues of Egypt, (8vo. 1810,) will supply the reader with most ample information on this curious and important subject. Many valuable observations on the peculiar application of these miracles to the idolatrous worship of the elements and the heavenly bodies, so prevalent among the Egyptians, may also be found in Dr. Owen's B. Lect. vol. i. sermon 10. But it is not perhaps so generally known, that both these learned writers appear to have been in some measure anticipated in their view of the subject by John Hutchinson, in his *Natural Hist. of the Bible.* See

his works, vol. i. or the detached Essay, 8vo. 1725, p. 128. to p. 170.

P. 36. l. 22. *The Israelites were guarded against the dangerous contagion of Idolatry, by a system of civil and religious policy*, &c.] See Lowman's Hebrew Govt. (8vo. 1745.) ch. 1, and 12. Spencer de Legibus Hebræorum, passim. (2 vols. folio, 1732.) Tenison on Idolatry, ch. 6. Burnet's Demonstr. of True Religion, ch. 12. (2 vols. 8vo. 1724—25.)

P. 39. l. 13. *From the scattered intimations to be found in Heathen historians*, &c.] The subject of the Heathen Mythology is of such vast extent, that to enter into a particular detail of the proofs and authorities on which the observations here advanced are founded, would far exceed the limits of a work like this. Indeed, the design of this Lecture was only to give, in the most concise and comprehensive form, a general view of the subject, by way of introduction to the main object of the work. But for the use of the student, who may be desirous of prosecuting the inquiry, the following list of authors is subjoined, with such particular references to their writings as may facilitate a research into this curious and interesting branch of theological study.

Maimonides de Idololatriâ.—Vossius de Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ. (4to. 1642, or folio, 1700.)—Van Dale de Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ. c. 2, 3. (4to. 1696.)—Spencer de Leg. Hebræorum.—Selden de Dis Syriis, prolegom. c. 3. (8vo. 1680.)—Spanhemii Introduct. ad Hist. Sacr. epoch. 1, 2. (4to. 1683.)—Hyde de Relig. Vet. Persarum. (4to. 1760.)—Loccenii Antiquitates Suevo-Gothicæ, l. i. c. 3.—Mornæus de Verit. Chr. Rel. c. 22, 23. —Palladius de Gentibus Indiæ et Bragmanibus.—Gale, Philos. Generalis, pars i.—Gale's Court of the Gentiles, p. 2, 3. (4to. 6 parts, 1672–7.)—Bp. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. b. iii. ch. 4, 5.—Abp. Tenison on Idolatry, ch. 3, 4, 5, 6.—Dr. T. Jackson's Works, vol. i. b. 5. ch 16. to ch. 22. (3 vols. folio, 1673.)—Smith's Christian Religion's Appeal, fol. 1675. b. iii. ch. 9.—Du Halde's Hist. of China.—Calmet's Dict. of the Bible. (3 vols. folio, 1732.)—Abbé de la Pluche's Hist. of the Heavens.—Bp. Warburton's Div. Legation of Moses, b. iii. sect. 6.—Hutchinson's Rel. of Satan, vol. viii. of his works.—Spearman's Letters on the Septuagint and the Heathen Mythology, let. ii. p. 65. —Preface to Dodd's Translation of Callimachus; the greater part of which, as well as several of the notes, was written by Bp. Horne, 4to. 1755.—Jones's Lect. on the Figurative Language of Scripture, and his Considerations

on the Worship of the Heathens, vol. iv. and xii. of his works.—Bryant's Analysis of the Heathen Mythology.—Maurice's Indian Antiquities.—Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ, b. i. sect. 1. (2 vols. 8vo. 1818.)

P. 49. l. 4. *The appellation of "elegant Divinities."*] This appellation is given them by Mr. Gibbon, who seems to have been, like most other infidel writers, as solicitous to extol Paganism, as to depreciate Christianity.

SERMON III.

P. 69. l. 9. *Disappointed and enraged at not finding in the Messiah a temporal Prince and Deliverer,* &c.] Josephus remarks, that that which chiefly incited the Jews to their last war with the Romans, was a doubtful prophecy found in the Holy Scriptures, that at the same time one in their dominions should be monarch of the whole world; and that many wise men were deceived in their interpretation, making account that he should be one of their own nation, though, indeed, (adds Josephus,) thereby was foretold *Vespasian's* empire. See his History of the Jews, b. vii. c. 12. The number of false Messiahs which at that time appeared, is, indeed, sufficient proof, that the seditious disposition of the Jews was greatly heightened by the failure of their expectations as to the coming of their temporal deliverer. The sect of the *Herodians*, in particular, stirred up this spirit among the people, by deluding them with false hopes of liberty, and by setting up a pretended Messiah to lead them on to rebellion. See Basnage, b. i. c. 6. (folio, 1708.)

P. 76. l. 15. *Intimating, that, whenever he came, the Sceptre would depart,* &c.] "Expectatur Messias apud Judæos ex tribu Judâ; quo verò tempore venturus est, innuit Textus, sceptrum et legislatorem ex Judâ sublatum iri. Itaque non is Messiæ apud Israelem finis, ut cæteras gentes subigeret; cùm Israel ipse regnum suum retenturus non sit." Mornæus de Verit. Chr. Rel. c. 27. p. 438.

Ibid. l. 18. *Is there not also a manifest impropriety in supposing that a temporal Deliverer could be intended,* &c.] "Si Messias Rex temporalis est in Israele regnaturus, Israeli geniales dies allaturus, quid meâ tantopere hæc aut credere aut scire interest? et quid est, quòd cum mihi ego venturum gratuler quem non sim visurus, nedum ut ejus lætitiæ particeps fiam? Quin potiùs, annon dolere debeat qui non videt? languere, qui tamdiu expectet? Et quî bonus censeri possit Deus, qui ea prædixerit nobis; quæ

si credimus, nihilo beatiores faciunt; si non credimus, in æternum miseros reddunt?" Mornæus, ut suprà, p. 448. Again:—"Sed hic de Messiâ articulus, si non aliud mysterium continet, quid Abrahamo, quid Mosi, quid tot Regibus, quid tot Prophetis, quid universo populo, contulit? Et cur tam sollicitè à Prophetis nunciatur? et cur toties inculcatur, non minùs prospero quàm adverso populi statu, non minùs sub bonis Regibus quàm sub Tyrannis? Sed, quod majus est, cur iis ipsis qui Messiam conspecturi non erant prædicatur, et largiùs et accuratiùs quàm qui ejus tempore erant nasciturі; nisi certè Messias iste Rex alterius generis sit quàm qui simpliciter boni appellantur, et hæc prosperitas, tantopere decantata, alibi quàm in terrâ, et hæc voluptas alia à sensuali istâ? Est tamen hic Judaicæ fidei articulus, et ad salutem quidem necessarius. Dicamus, igitur, hunc Messiam lætitiæ momentaneæ Regem et largitorem non esse, sed salutis æternæ, vitæ beatæ." Ibid. p. 448. So also, p. 449, "Lætare, inquiunt Prophetæ, filia Sion, exulta Hierusalem, plaudite gentes et populi. Cur ita? Post aliquot annorum chiliadas exsurget Rex magnus in Israele. Quid absurdius? Hic, aiunt, optimam Pacem faciet. Quid meâ refert, si bello vexor? Et carceres aperiet. Quid juvat si interim situ et squallore computresco? Et de cæteris orbis gentibus triumphabit. Hæc quid ad me, quem gentes certatim conculcant, et in triumphum, manibus post terga revinctis, toto orbe circumducunt? ... Ergo, lætitia profectò ista latiùs patet, et qui eam prædicunt, utique præsentiunt, præsentéque afficiuntur et incalescunt: et qui audiunt, degustant jam illam, ab eâque levamen percipiunt: in mentibus, inquam, suis illius jam regni privilegiis et immunitatibus gaudent, antequam Rex ipse tantopere expetendus et expectandus natus et editus sit in terrâ."

P. 77. l. 1. *The Jewish Scriptures continually set forth the pomps and vanities of this world as unworthy the regard of the faithful.*] "Rursùm credunt Scripturas à Deo esse, et ad salutem conducere et ducere: et creberrimè detonant illæ in luxum, in delicias, in vanitates hujus mundi: hæc omnia Deum ærumnis, funeribus, sordibus commutaturum. Quæ interim Scripturæ ab omni nos lætitiâ retrahunt, ut ad hanc unam excitent; ab omni mundanâ magnificentiâ, ut de hujus regni splendore nos edoceant. Quis ergo non videat quam tanti faciunt Scripturæ lætitiam ab illâ quam aspernantur, quam damnant, planè diversam esse? regnumque illud cujus nobis desiderium excitant, in cœlo utique possidendum, non in terrâ?" Mornæus, ut suprà, p. 449.

Ibid. l. 16. *Nay, even if it were acknowledged, that this*

world must come to an end, &c.] "Demus, verò, sectatores et spectatores Judaici istius Messiæ omnibus hujus vitæ voluptatibus et commodis apud eum cumulari et perfrui: quis tandem ejus finis? *Morietur*, aiunt, *et generatio ejus cum eo:* et hoc loco, quot annos vitæ habiturus sit inter se digladiantur! Hæc quàm procul absunt ab eâ lætitiâ quam Prophetæ æternam pollicentur! Quorsum verò ob brevem istam et momentaneam, ut ita dicam, voluptatis coruscationem, tantâ lætitiâ afficiantur patres?" Mornæus, ut suprà, p. 450. "Some say, that he shall not die: and this prejudice is of very long standing; since they told Jesus Christ, How sayest thou, that the Son of Man shall be taken up? for Christ *abideth for ever*. *Jacob* believed that *Samson* was the *Messiah*; but seeing him crushed under the ruins of a temple, he altered his opinion, because the Messiah is not to die. And yet he says, that the days of the Messiah *are forty years*; but others give him as many years as there are days in one year. Nay, they are multiplied to 7000, or at least there shall be as many from the Messiah, as from the Creation of the World to his coming." Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, b. iv. ch. 26. §. 3. (folio, 1708.)

P. 78. l. 4. *written* (*as there is good reason to believe*) *either before, or about the time of our Lord's appearance.*] Concerning the antiquity and the authority of the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, the writings of Philo, and the Chaldee Paraphrases, see Allix's Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church, ch. 5, 6, and 7. (8vo. 1689 reprinted 1821.) Also for an account of the Jewish Traditions in the time of our blessed Saviour, see the same learned and valuable work, ch. 2.

Ibid. l. 10. *The Jewish teachers understood the first promise made to Adam, of a Redeemer, to denote a spiritual deliverance from sin and death*, &c.] "Nec si nobis cum antiquioribus Judæis negotium esset, lis longa foret. Quæ enim citavimus omnia, et Rabbini vetustiores et Chaldæi Interpretes ad Messiam ejusque regnum uno ore retulerunt: perspicuum verò præterea, Cabalistas, (qui Thalmudistis multò vetustiores, quique, ut ipsi Judæi aiunt, medullam Scripturarum penetrant, cùm Thalmudistæ in cortice hæreant) expiationem peccati et medelam contagiosi illius veneni à Messiâ expectâsse, quòd serpentem in Adamum primùm, mox ex Adamo in universam prosapiam effudisse profitebantur. Interim utcunque præoccupati sint eorum animi, non desunt apud recentiores qui de Messiæ naturâ et conditione, deque adventûs scopo et fine nobiscum sentiant.....Clariùs verò cæteris R. Hacadosch, seu sanctus,

Messias, inquit, *per suam ipsius mortem stirpem Adami salvam faciet, et animas ab inferno liberabit, quo nomine Jesus vocabitur, id est, Salvator.*" Mornæus, cap. 27. p. 446. 448. "At negare saltem nequeant, quin Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon per mortem, quam Deus Adamo interminatur si mandatum transgressus fuerit, mortem spiritalem intellexerit; mortem, inquam, animæ peccato sauciæ vitâque suâ destitutæ, id est, Deo; per venenum autem serpentis peccatum ipsum, quod, inquit, sub Messiâ cessaturum sit; quæ etiam antiquorum Cabalistarum sententia et interpretatio fuit: item, quin hunc locum antiqua Synagoga de Messiâ exposuerit, sicuti tum ex septuaginta interpretibus, tum ex antiquo illo Thargum Hierosolymitano, liquet. Ut enim ait: *Quamdiu, ô serpens, filii mulieris observant legem, inferunt illi tibi mortem: contrà, ubi illam derelinquunt, tu pungis calcaneum, et caldè nocere potes; sed cùm tuo vulneri nullum adsit remedium, remedium certè illis certum et paratum est, quia in fine dierum conterent te calce per Christum, seu Messiam, Regem suum.* Quòd si mors illa spiritalis est, spiritalis hostis, spiritalia arma, quis duellum Messiæ cum diabolo spiritale futurum neget? spiritales vires? spiritale imperium?" Ibid. p. 437.

P. 78. l. 20. *The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and many other passages of Scripture descriptive of the Messiah's humiliation and sufferings*, &c.] "It is worthy to be observed," says Dr. Allix, "that by comparing these texts which speak of the low estate and sufferings of one that is there also described as being in the highest glory and dignity, they have been convinced that both these descriptions are of one and the same Person: and therefore notwithstanding the prophetical descriptions of the glory of their promised Messias at his coming, they have acknowledged those Prophecies to concern him also which speak of his humiliation; as that in Zech. ix. 9, where he is represented riding on an Ass; so you see in the Targum, and in the Talmud; and that in Isa. liii. where he is said to be loaded with griefs, and to be the most despised of men; as you see in the Targum, in the Talmud, and in Midrash Conen. To which may be added that of David, Ps. xxii. and that of Zech. xii. 10, which treat of the same matter, and were referred to the Messias." Allix's Judgm. of the Jewish Church, p. 36. See also p. 33, and p. 407. and Mornæus de Verit. Chr. Rel. cap. 30. p. 496.

P. 79. l. 15. "*By which monstrous fiction*," *as it has been admirably observed*, &c.] See Bp. Horne's Sermon on the Case of the Jews, vol. i. serm. 8. See also South's Sermon on the Case of the Jews, vol. iii. serm. 8. p. 307.

P. 80. l. 2. *These passages the interpreters already mentioned expound*, &c.] "The greater part of the Jewish nation, being oppressed with the Roman yoke, and finding no comfort for it in these notions, which are for the most part spiritual, did therefore, about our Saviour's time, frame to themselves more carnal notions concerning the kingdom of the Messias; fancying that he should come as a victorious Prince to conquer, and to avenge them of their enemies. They removed from their thoughts the accounts of his death, as contrary to those glorious descriptions which suited better with their minds. They expected the Messias should come to restore presently the kingdom unto Israel: and, in a word, following their own desires and imaginations, they confounded Christ's first coming with his second; and then confirmed themselves in this mistake, partly, because the Prophets seemed to describe the kingdom of the Messias very carnally; partly, because they knew not what to think of a celestial or spiritual kingdom, such as his should be, who was to sit on the throne of God. And these false conceits of theirs, joined with the worldly interests of their leaders, brought them to reject the true Messias at his coming. But, after all, it is certain, 1. That the contrary opinions, concerning the spiritual sense of the Prophecies, was the constant ancient doctrine of their nation. 2. That those Jews that were converted to Christianity by the ministry of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, were converted upon these maxims, which were then the maxims of the wisest and the religiousest part of their nation. 3. That the Apostles in their writings, as well as Christ Jesus in his discourses, cited the Texts of the Old Testament according to the commonly received sense of the Synagogue: and in truth the authority of these proofs in that received sense did not a little contribute to the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles." Allix's Judgt. of the Jewish Church, p. 39, 40.

Ibid. l. 10. *Or how could the Gentiles rejoice in him*, &c.] "Misera verò admodum fuisset cæterarum nationum alioqui conditio et expectatio (quarum hoc loco Messias expectatio et desiderium vocatur) si idcirco tantùm venturus ille erat, ut eas devastaret et Judæis manciparet. Regnabit porrò et apud omnes gentes, et in omnium gentium commodum: Ergo, juxta primam promissionem, in *mentibus* nostris, quas peccati servitute et diaboli jugo liberabit."...."Sed enim cùm in illis omnibus Psalmis non dicat ille, *Lætare, Israel, quoniam gentibus imperabis;* sed, *Lætamini gentes, jubilate populi et Reges, quoniam dabo vobis regem;* manifestum est, insignem hanc lætitiam non

ideò nunciari, quòd regem Judæum gentes habituræ sint; unaquæque enim ex patriâ habere malit: aut reges Monarcham, à quo in officio contineantur; alienum enim jugum ægrè patiuntur, et consortis, nedum domini, ut plurimum impatientes sunt: sed quia alia est hujus Regis quàm aliorum natura et conditio, utpote qui rex animarum sit, vindex servorum peccati, spiritalis Monarcha." Mornæus, cap. 37. p. 438. 440. See also South's Serm. on the Jews, vol. iii. serm. 8. p. 304.

P. 80. l. 27. *He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.*] See Phil. de Mornay, de Ver. Christ. Rel. cap. 31. p. 512—517. Also Kidder's Demonstr. of the Messias, part. i. ch. 11. p. 135—163; and part iii. ch. 1. p. 24. Hickes's Sermons, vol. iii. serm. 9. Moss's Sermons, vol. vii. serm. 5. Bp. Browne's Sermons, vol. i. serm. 12. South's Sermons, vol. iii. serm. 8. p. 308.

P. 82. l. 26. *Neither was this any new or strange doctrine, to the most ancient interpreters in the Jewish Church;* &c.] Dr. Allix proves, that the ancient Jews acknowledged a Plurality and a Trinity in the Divine Nature; that they had a distinct notion of the Word, as a person, and a divine person, to whom they referred all the appearances of God, or of the Angel of the Lord spoken of in the Old Testament; that they often used the term Λόγος or Word, in speaking of the Messias; that they acknowledged the Messias should be the Son of God; and believed he was represented in the Old Testament as JEHOVAH who should come. See his Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church, ch. 8—18. Also Kidder's Demonstr. of the Messias, part iii. ch. 4, 5, 6. Bedford's L. Moyer's Lect. serm. 4. p. 124—133, serm. 6. p. 172—210. with the Appendix to it; and the Appendix to Serm. 8. (1739-40.) Mornæus, cap. 28. and Bryant's Sentiments of Philo Judæus on the Logos. (8vo. 1797.)

P. 83. l. 27. *Had mixed with the written word a multitude of unauthorized traditions.*] See Kidder's Demonstr. part ii. p. 26. Limborchi Collatio cum Judæo, respons. iii. cap. 5. p. 175. (4to. 1687.)

P. 84. l. 5. *Although we read not of such very extravagant notions respecting the Messiah, at that period, as have since been current among the Jews of later times,* &c.] Concerning the diversity of opinions entertained by the Jews, at different periods, respecting the Messiah, see Kidder's Demonstr. part iii. ch. 10. and Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, b. iv. chap. 23—27.

In addition to the authorities referred to in the Notes on this Lecture, the following works have been consulted:

—Raymundi Martini "Pugio Fidei," fol. Lips. 1687.—Wagenselii "Tela ignea Satanæ," 4to. 1681. tom. i. præfat. p. 54. 74.—Limborchi "Amica Collatio cum erudito Judæo," 4to. 1687.—Fabricius de Ver. Chr. Rel. c. 31.—Grotius de Ver. Chr. Rel. l. 5.—Cunæus de Rep. Hebr. l. 1. c. 18. (8vo. 1617.)—Othonis "Hist. Doct. Misnic."—Hieron. Savanarolæ "Triumphus Crucis," l. 4. c. 5.—Maii Synopsis Theol. Jud. 4to. 1698. loc. 8. de Messiâ, p. 117—154.—Jos. de Voisin Theol. Jud. 4to. 1647. l. 1. c. 5. p. 28—54.—Hulsii Theol. Jud. 4to. l. 1. part i. p. 6—15. and 36—42.—Pfeifferi Theol. Jud. atque Moham. 4to.—Dr. Jackson's Works, vol. i. b. i. ch. 18. to ch. 30.—Bp. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. b. ii. ch. 7.—Bp. Newton's Dissertations, vol. v. on the Infidelity of the Jews.—Dr. Knight's L. Moyer's Lect. (8vo. 1720–21.)—Dr. Stanhope's Boyle's Lect. 8 first Sermons. (4to. 1701.)—Dr. Berriman's Boyle's Lect. 8 last Sermons. (2 vols. 8vo. 1730–32.)—Prideaux's Connection.—Shuckford's Connection.

SERMON IV.

P. 92. l. 24. *some of the most important facts recorded by the Evangelists were known by Heathen authors of the same period:*] For Heathen testimonies to the facts recorded by the Evangelists, see Lardner's great work on that subject, and Dr. Paley's Evidences of Christianity, part i. ch. 9. sect. 1—11. which is professedly an abridgment of Lardner. See also Cave's Lives of the Primitive Fathers, Introd. sect. 5. (folio, 1677.)

P. 94. l. 8. *Gallio, the deputy of Achaia*, &c.] In the first edition, I inadvertently stated that Gallio suffered the Apostle to be illegally beaten; whereas it was *Sosthenes*, not *Paul*, who was beaten by the tumultuous Greeks, after Gallio had driven the Jews, Paul's accusers, from the judgment-seat. It appears, that Gallio, in dismissing the Jews and Paul without inquiring into the dispute between them, acted in strict conformity with his duty as a magistrate, since, by the existing law of Rome he was not warranted in taking cognizance of any questions among the Jews relating to *religion*. Nevertheless, his conduct may be considered as affording a striking instance of the *indifference* with which Christianity was regarded by these Gentile magistrates; since, if they had paid due attention to the wonderful works by which it was attested, they could not have deemed themselves justified in putting the Apostles to silence, and disregarding what they had to

advance in vindication of a doctrine which concerned all mankind, no less than the Jews themselves. Dr. Jortin observes, "We read in the Acts of the Apostles, that Gallio, when the Jews brought St. Paul before him, would not give them a hearing. He thought it unreasonable that Paul should be punished by him, because he differed from his countrymen in matters of religion; and he thought right: but whether the doctrine taught by St. Paul were true or false, *that* he never considered for his own information, and therein he was very careless and negligent." See his Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 57. See also Biscoe on the Acts of the Apostles, vol. i. p. 59. (2 vols. 8vo. 1742.) Weston on the Rejection of Christian Miracles by the Heathens, ch. iii. p. 43. and Comber's Heathen Rejection of Christianity, part i. sect. v. p. 31.

P. 94. l. 26. *Christians suffered persecution from Heathen rulers, by being ignorantly confounded with the Jews.*] See Dr. Powell's Sermons, disc. x. p. 155. (8vo. 1776.) also Kortholti Pagan. Obtrect. l. i. c. iii. sect. 6. with the authorities therein quoted from Tertullian, Lactantius, Suetonius, Dio Cassius, Tacitus, Lampridius, &c.

P. 95. l. 15. *But this may rather be considered as a cessation of the Jewish hostility towards them, than as a proof of lenity on the part of the Heathen,* &c.] See Benson's Hist. of the first Planting the Christian Religion, vol. i. ch. ix. sect. 3. (4to. 1756.) and Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel Hist. p. 123, &c.

P. 96. l. 25. *confirmed by cotemporary historians of established credit.*] Besides the valuable works of Lardner and Paley, already referred to, see an excellent treatise, translated from the French of Professor Bullet, and entitled, "The History of the Establishment of Christianity, compiled from Jewish and Heathen Authors only." 8vo. 1776. The references at the end of this treatise are peculiarly valuable.

P. 98. l. 1. *This persecution,* &c.] See Spanheim. Hist. Sacr. sæc. i. sect. ix. Dannenmayr, Hist. Eccl. period. i. cap. 1. §. 28. Mosheim, cent. i. part i. ch. v. sect. 13, 14.

Ibid. l. 11. *They were also distinguished by the signal protection of Providence,* &c.] "Ne verò hisce malis in Judæorum pœnam ab irato numine immissis simul involveretur ecclesia, quæ isto tempore Hierosolymis erat, divino illa oraculo admonita Pellam Perææ urbem concessit, ibique divino tecta præsidio habitavit, ut testatur Eusebius, lib. 3. Hist. Eccles. cap. 5."—"Quemadmodum sub Vespasiano res Judaicæ pessum iverunt; ita contrà Christianismus majora indies incrementa sumpsit, concessâ sub

mitissimis Imperatoribus pace, et confirmatis multorum animis, quòd Judæorum in Christum et Christianos molitiones tam graviter à Deo punitas viderent." Kortholti Hist. Eccl. 4to, 1708. p. 23, 24.

P. 98. l. 25. *Domitian.*] "Ab hoc Domitiano, quem non immeritò Tertullianus in Apolog. cap. 5. *portionem Neronis* de crudelitate vocat, ultimis imperii annis secunda persecutio adversùs Christianos excitata fuit. Cujus causâ sine dubio fuit auctus sub Vespasianis Christianorum numerus. Alii tamen et hanc addunt, quòd Deum, qualis haberi volebat, Domitianum agnoscere nollent Christiani." Vide Kortholt, ut suprà, p. 27; also Mosheim, cent. 1. part i. ch. 5. §. 15. Concerning St. John's miraculous preservation from martyrdom, some doubts have been raised by writers of respectability. Dr. Jortin (who, perhaps, too often leans to the *sceptical* side of the question in matters of this kind) seems inclined to reject it: but his conjecture that the story of this particular species of martyrdom (the caldron of boiling oil) might have been suggested by our Lord's saying to James and John, "Ye shall drink indeed of my *cup*, and be baptized with the *baptism* that I am baptized with," (the *caldron* representing the *cup*, and the *oil* the *baptism*,) seems to be very fanciful and extravagant. See his Remarks on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 307. 2nd edition. (3 vols. 8vo, 1805.)

P. 102. l. 12. *Many of them suffered the severest tortures, rather than comply with this decree.*] See Lardner's Credibility, vol. vii. p. 210.

Ibid. l. 27. *Of the number of those who fell victims to these merciless persecutions*, &c.] The numbers are differently stated by different writers. Dodwell (in his Dissert. Cyprian.) controverts the accounts in Eusebius and other ancient writers, and labours to prove that the number of primitive martyrs was much less than is generally supposed. Mosheim thinks that Dodwell errs in the other extreme. Cent. i. part i. ch. v. sect. 11.

P. 103. l. 21. *Calumny of the foulest kind*, &c.] These calumnies are fully detailed in the elaborate work of the learned Professor Kortholt, entitled, "*Paganus Obtrectator, sive de Calumniis Gentilium in Veteres Christianos.*" Kiloni. 4to. 1698. These grosser calumnies, which were ably repelled by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Minutius Felix, prevailed till towards the end of the 3rd century; when, it should seem, from the silence of Arnobius and Lactantius on that point, that they were discontinued, through an entire conviction of their falsehood: though Christianity was still calumniated

as the cause of all the public calamities which befell the Roman empire, and was loaded with a variety of other reproaches. See Lardner's Credibility, vol. vii. p. 33. and p. 105.

P. 105. l. 13. *Few of the writings of these Sophists are now extant.*] To the Abbé Houtteville's excellent work, entitled, "*La Religion Chrétienne prouvée par les Faits*," there is prefixed a *Critical and Historical Discourse on the Method of the principal Authors for and against Christianity*; containing a compendious statement of the arguments of the Heathen philosophers, and the answers made to them by the Christian apologists. This discourse was translated into English, and published separately, 8vo, 1739.

P. 107. l. 14. *Hence the reputation of the impostor Simon Magus, of Apuleius, and of Apollonius Tyanæus.*] See a Dissertation on the Life of Apollonius, by the Abbé Houtteville, affixed to his critical and historical Discourse above mentioned: also Mornæus de Ver. Chr. Rel. c. xxxiii. p. 548. Kortholt. Pag. Obtrect. l. iii. c. 4. §. 2. Huetii Demonstr. Evang. prop. ix. c. 147. (folio, 1679.) Bp. Douglas's *Criterion*, p. 55—63. 1st edit. 1757.

Ibid. l. 25. *The Jews were unceasing*, &c.] "Judæi cæteris pejores quibus concreditus fuerat Christus, prodebant: qui prædicare debuissent, atrociter criminabantur: vix quisquam discipulorum limen urbis ingressus erat, quin ad necem posceretur." Mornæus de Verit. c. 32. p. 528. The virulence of the Jews against the primitive Christians is thus adverted to in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna concerning the martyrdom of St. Polycarp: "Ταῦτα οὖν μετὰ τοσοῦτον τάχους ἐγίνετο, θᾶττον τοῦ λεχθῆναι· τῶν ὄχλων παραχρῆμα συναγαγόντων ἔκ τε τῶν ἐργαστηρίων καὶ βαλανείων ξύλα καὶ φρύγανα· μάλιστα Ἰουδαίων προθύμως, ΩΣ ΕΘΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ, εἰς ταῦτα ὑπουργούντων. Hæc igitur citiùs peracta sunt, quàm pronunciata; cunctâ plebe confestim ex officinis ac balneis ligna et sarmenta congregante; *præcipuè Judæis, alacri animo, ut solent, ad ista juvantibus.*" §. xiii. Russell. Patr. Apost. tom. ii. p. 348. (2 vols. 8vo. 1746.) Bp. Watson remarks, from the work of Origen against Celsus, "that the Jews, in the very beginning of Christianity, were the authors of all those calumnies which Celsus afterwards took such great delight in urging against the Christians." See his *Apology for Christianity*, let. vi. (12mo, 1776.) See also Jortin's Disc. on the Truth of the Christian Relig. ch. i. p. 35. and Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. i. part i. ch. 3. and cent. ii. part i. ch. 1.

P. 110. l. 4. *Notwithstanding the many plausible excuses*, &c.] Respecting the nature of the prejudices enter-

tained by the Heathen against Christianity, and the perverseness of their opposition to it, many excellent remarks may be found in Jortin's Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Rel. ch. i. p. 36—76. and in Mornay de Verit. cap. 32, 33. See also Hare's Essay on the Unreasonableness of Scepticism, 12mo. 1801. ch. i. ii.

P. 113. l. 2. *they might have perceived that the objections of the Jews to the Gospel were of no real weight*, &c.] "Etenim quos locupletiores testes [sc. Judæis ipsis] habituri aut optaturi erant Gentiles? Quatenus videlicet qui Jesum et Apostolos morti tradiderant, pro veritate et integritate librorum, in quibus promissus, prædictus, nunciatus, ab omni tempore dicebatur Christus, occumbere parati erant?"—Mornæus de Verit. c. xxxii. p. 522.

Ibid. l. 27. *They considered not, that the more despised and ill-treated our Saviour was, the more was the Divine power manifested in the success of his religion.*] This argument is urged with great force by Mornay in his Treatise above quoted; c. xxxii. p. 523—532.

P. 114. l. 20. *They could not but perceive the absurdity of their own theology.*] "They thought," says Dr. Jortin, "and they had reason to think, that the religion of their country was fable and forgery, and a heap of inconsistent lies, which inclined them to suppose that other religions were no better, and deserved not to be examined. Hence it came to pass, that even when the Apostles preached the Gospel, and wrought miracles in confirmation of a doctrine every way worthy of God, many Gentiles knew little or nothing of it, and would not take the least pains to inform themselves about it. This appears plainly from ancient history." Disc. on Christian Rel. p. 56. See also Kortholt. de Relig. Ethnicâ, &c. Disquisitio. 4to. 1665. p. 20.

P. 117. l. 7. *to the power of magic.*] See Kortholt. Pagan. Obtrect. l. iii. c. 4. *de magiâ Christo hujusque cultoribus exprobratâ.*

P. 119. l. 15. *attributing to its true disciples the misconduct and perverse opinions of Heretics.*] See Kortholt. Pagan. Obtrect. lib. i. cap. 6. *de Hæreticorum portentosis dogmatibus, impiisque facinoribus, sinceris Christi cultoribus imputatis.*

Ibid. l. 27. *charged the whole body of the Christian disciples with Atheism, for refusing to worship the Gods of the state*, &c.] See Kortholt, ut suprà, l. ii. cap. 10. *de Atheismo Christianis à Gentilibus objecto*, sect. 1, 2. 12. 13.

P. 120. l. 11. *Christians were well entitled to retaliate this charge upon the Heathen.*] It was successfully retaliated by the primitive Fathers of the Christian Church, by Poly-

carp, Arnobius, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Theodoret, Athanasius, and others. See Kortholt, ut suprà, cap. x. sect. 14—17.

P. 120. l. 22. *The Pagan religion, says a very learned writer,* &c.] See Warburton's Divine Legation, b. ii. sect. 6.

P. 123. l. 1. *It was made a principal ground of argument against Christians, by Heathen writers, that all the public calamities which befell the State, were to be attributed to the increasing influence of the Gospel.*] "Quemadmodum omnis generis mala *culpæ*, (ut scholæ vocant,) hoc est, grandia quævis crimina ac horrenda flagitia, Christianis affingebant idololatræ; sic et mala *pœnæ*, omnia, inquam, infortunia quibus humanum genus premebatur, iisdem in acceptis referebant, nec nisi ipsorum sanguine expiari posse sibi habebant persuasum. Quo S. Paulum respexisse nonnulli putant, 1 Cor. iv. 13. dum ait ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν. Nempe *καθάρματα* homines erant *sacri*, (ut Latini vocabant,) seu *piaculares*, quorum capite omnia civitatis aut gentis alicujus scelera luebantur et publicæ calamitates expiabantur, quique avertendæ Deorum iræ mactabantur." Kortholt. Pag. Obtrect. l. iii. cap. 15. *de malis et calamitatibus publicis Christianismo imputatis;* sect. i. Many authorities from Tertullian, Eusebius, Arnobius, Ambrose, Augustin, Orosius, and others, are also quoted to the same effect, in the same chapter, sect. 2—7.

Respecting the sense of the word περικαθάρματα, as applied in the above quotation, see also Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, and Pasoris Lexic. N. T.

Ibid. l. 27. *The admirable lives of these ornaments of the Christian faith.*] See Kett's Bampt. Lect. (1790.) serm. 2, 3, 4, 5, which contain some just animadversions on Mr. Gibbon's insidious misrepresentations of the characters and conduct of the primitive Christians.

P. 124. l. 8. *even after the Apostolic age.*] In the former edition, I had said, "*to the end of the third century.*" But, upon further consideration, not having carefully examined the difficult question as to the time of the cessation of miracles, I wish to avoid giving so definitive an opinion, however supported by good authorities. That miracles were wrought by the immediate converts and successors of the Apostles, few, I apprehend, will call in question.

Besides the works above referred to, some important observations on the state of the Heathen world during the primitive ages of Christianity, with strictures on Gibbon's History, occur in Dr. Ogilvie's "Inquiry into the Causes of Infidelity and Scepticism," in a note from p. 29 to p. 38.

On the Gentile theology, see also Cudworth's Intellectual System, Gale's Court of the Gentiles, and Stanley's Hist. of Philosophy.

SERMON V.

P. 130. l. 24. *These considerations*, &c.] Respecting the conversion of Constantine, see Spanheim. Introd. ad Hist. Sacr. sæc. 4. cap. 2. (4to, 1683.) Kortholt. Hist. Eccl. p. 94. (4to, 1697.) Dannenmayr, Hist. Eccl. p. 235. Cave's Lives of the Fathers, introduction to the 2nd part, p. 270. Mosheim (vol. i. p. 264.) resolves it into a dream. His annotator is more doubtful. Fabricius (Bibl. Gr. vol. vi.) ascribes it to a solar halo. The authors of the Universal History take it literally as related by Eusebius: see Mosheim, as above. Jortin is perplexed about it, but leans to Fabricius's opinion, which sets aside the *miracle*, but admits the phænomenon to have really happened. Hist. Eccl. vol. ii. p. 151, &c. Fleury takes it on Eusebius's authority. Warburton adopts Fabricius's opinion: see his Julian, p. 111. (8vo, 1750.)

P. 131. l. 28. *we may observe, in their writings of this date, many vain attempts to gloss over the follies of Heathenism*, &c.] "L'idolatrie n'avoit point de meilleur appui, que les gens de lettres. Tout ce que Julien estimoit, grammaires, poëtes, sophistes, philosophes, si l'on en excepte un petit nombre, tenoient pour les vieilles superstitions. Comme ils en sentoient le ridicule que les Chrétiens leur remettoient incessamment sous les yeux, ils employoient ce qu'ils avoient de littérature et d'esprit, pour donner au Paganisme un tour plausible et en former un système moins insensé. Ils avouoient que la mythologie étoit insoutenable, prise à la lettre: mais en même tems elle contenoit, selon eux, sous l'emblème des fictions, les profondeurs de la Physique, de la Morale, et de la Théologie. L'absurdité de la lettre montroit assez qu'il falloit aller plus avant, et perçer les enveloppes grossières pour découvrir un sens plus sublime. Un air de mystère convenoit à la vérité. On l'avoit ainsi voilée pour la rendre plus respectable à ceux qui la rechercheient, et pour la dérober à ceux qui ne s'en rendoient pas dignes par leurs recherches." L'Abbé Bléterie, Vie de l'Empereur Julien, p. 19, &c.

P. 134. l. 21. *even whilst he was under the tuition of Christian instructors, he is said to have discovered a peculiar antipathy to the Gospel, and a partiality to Heathenism*, &c.] "'Αλλ' ὥσπερ πῦρ ἐμφωλεῦον ὕλῃ, κἂν μήπω πρὸς φλόγα λαμπρὰν ἀρθῇ, σπιωθῆρές τινες ἐξάπτοντες, ἢ καπνὸς ἐκ βάθους, ὑποσημαίνουσιν....οὕτω καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ μὲν πολὺ τῆς ἀσεβείας

κατέκρυπτεν, ὑπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ, καὶ τῆς τοῦ κρατοῦντος παιδαγωγίας· (οὕπω γὰρ τὸ φανερῶς ἀσεβεῖν ἦν ἀσφαλές·) ἔστι δ' ὅπου καὶ παρεγύμνου τὸ τῆς γνώμης ἀπόῤῥητον, τοῖς ὀξυτέροις τὴν ἀσέβειαν ἢ τὴν σύνεσιν, ἔν τε πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν λόγοις, πλέον ἢ καλῶς εἶχεν ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων διατεινόμενος, (προφάσει δῆθεν, ὡς τὸν ἥττω γυμνάζων λόγον· τὸ δὲ ἦν, ὄντως γυμνασία κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας,) καὶ πᾶσι χαίρων οἷς ἀσεβὴς τρόπος χαρακτηρίζεται. Quin potiùs, quemadmodum ignem in materiâ latentem, etiamsi nondum in luculentam flammam attollatur, emicantes tamen scintillæ quædam, aut fumus è profundo, subindicant: ..... eodem quoque modo ipse, tametsi ob temporis incommoditatem, ejusque, qui rerum potiebatur authoritatem atque disciplinam, majorem impietatis partem occultaret, (nondum enim impietatem aperte profiteri tutum erat,) interdum tamen iis qui impietate quàm prudentiâ acutiores erant mentis arcanum aperiebat, tum in disputationibus quas cum fratre habebat, plùs quàm æquum erat pro Ethnicis contendens, (hoc quidem prætextu, quasi inferiorem doctrinam, exercitationis causâ, tueretur; cæterùm re verâ adversùs veritatem scipsum exercens,) tum omnibus iis rebus gaudens, quibus morum impietas quasi certissimis quibusdam notis exprimitur." Greg. Nazianz. adversùs Julian. Oratio tertia, p. 61. tom. i. edit. Paris. 1630. See also other authorities referred to in Cave's Lives of the Fathers, part ii. introduction, p. 286.

P. 135. l. 26. *But of Julian's attachment to Heathen idolatry, and his belief in the grossest of its absurdities, his own admirers will hardly suffer us to doubt.*] " *Τίς οὕτως ἄλλοτε ἄλλων ἀπέστη σιτίων, ἄλλοτε ἄλλον θεραπεύων θεὸν, τὸν Πᾶνα, τὸν Ἑρμῆν, τὴν Ἑκάτην, τὴν Ἶσιν, τῶν λοιπῶν ἕκαστον; τίς οὕτω πολλὰς ἀσιτίας μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἤνεγκε θεοῖς συνιών;* Quis ita ac ipse pro temporum diversitate variis cibis abstinuit ut modò huic, modò alii Deo, cultum suum præstaret; Pani nimirum, Mercurio, Hecatæ, Isidi, et reliquorum unicuivis? Quis tot jejunia cum voluptate, ut cum Diis versari posset, instituit?" Libanii Parentalis in Julianum Imp. in Fabricii Bibl. Gr. tom. vii. p. 309.— " *Ἐν αἷς* [sc. *μαντείαις*] *διῆγε, μάντεών τε τοῖς ἀρίστοις χρώμενος, αὐτός τε ὢν οὐδαμῶς ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ δεύτερος. Ὡς δὲ μηδ' ἐξεῖναι τοῖς μάντεσι παρακρούεσθαι, συνεξεταζόντων τὰ δεικνύμενα τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐκείνου· καί που καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῦτο ἐπισταμένων ἀπῆλθε κρατῶν, οὕτως εὐρεῖά τε καὶ πάμφορος ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ βασιλεῖ.* In his enim [sc. *vaticiniis*] versabatur ita, ut et optimis quibusque vatum uteretur, et ipse illius artis peritiâ nemini esset secundus. Adeò ut fallere vatibus neutiquam liceret, cùm ea quæ afferebantur signa ipse semper unà oculis lustraret. Atque tantum in illâ arte profecerat,

ut eos quoque longissimè anteceller et, qui solam illam callebant; tam capax tamque fœcundum ingenium Imperatori Juliano fuit." Ibid. p. 314. Many other remarkable passages to the same effect are interspersed throughout this funeral Oration upon Julian, and another short oration by the same panegyrist, entitled, *De obitu Juliani morte*. Fabric. Bibliotheca Græca, tom. vii. cap. 9.

P. 136. l. 18. *that the Evil Spirit was permitted to work upon him by diabolical illusions, and to plunge him still further into the depths of perdition.*] How justly it might be said of Julian, as of Ahab, that he had "sold himself to work iniquity," appears from Sozomen's Eccl. Hist. lib. v. cap. 2. and from Greg. Nazianzen's 3rd Oration against Julian, who thus indignantly describes his hatred to Christianity:—"Τίς ἡ τοιαύτη τοῦ κακοῦ φιλονεικία; τίς ὁ τῆς ἀσεβείας ἔρως; τίς ὁ δρόμος τῆς ἀπωλείας; πόθεν οὕτω ΜΙΣΟΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, ὁ Χριστοῦ μαθητὴς, ὁ τοσούτοις λόγοις τῆς ἀληθείας προσομιλήσας, καὶ τὰ μὲν εἰπὼν, τὰ δὲ ἀκούσας τῶν φερόντων εἰς σωτηρίαν; Οὐ γὰρ ἔφθη κληρονομήσας τὴν βασιλείαν, καὶ παῤῥησιάζεται τὴν ἀσέβειαν, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ γενέσθαι ποτὲ Χριστιανὸς αἰσχυνόμενος, ἢ μνησικακῶν ὑπὲρ τούτου Χριστιανοῖς, οἷς τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐκοινώνησε. Καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον αὐτῷ τῶν τολμημάτων, ὡς οἱ τοῖς ἀποῤῥήτοις ἐκείνου καλλωπιζόμενοι (εἰς οἷους ἐμπίπτειν ἀναγκάζομαι λόγους!) αἵματι μὲν οὐχ ὁσίῳ τὸ λουτρὸν ἀποῤῥύπτεται, τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς τελειώσει τὴν τελείωσιν τοῦ μύσους ἀντιτιθεὶς, ὗς ἐν βορβόρῳ κυλισθεὶς, κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν· καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἀφαγνίζεται, τῆς ἀναιμάκτου θυσίας ἀποκαθαίρων, ὃι ἧς ἡμεῖς Χριστῷ κοινωνοῦμεν, καὶ τῶν παθημάτων, καὶ τῆς θεότητος. Quodnam hoc tam pertinax mali studium? Quis tantus impietatis amor? Quis tam effusus ad exitium cursus? Unde tam infestus Christi hostis, qui Christi discipulus fuerat, qui tot tantisque veritatis sermonibus assueverat, multaque ad salutem spectantia, partim dixerat, partim audiverat? Vix enim imperii hæreditatem adire cœperat, cùm impietatem palàm liberéque profitetur, perinde atque hoc quoque nomine erubescens, quòd Christianus aliquando fuisset, aut eâ de causâ Christianis succensens, quibus nominis societate junctus fuerat. Atque hinc quidem facinora sua auspicatur, quemadmodum narrant qui ipsius arcanis gloriantur, (Proh! in quos sermones incurrere cogor!) impuro et nefario sanguine Lavacrum extergit, initiationi nostræ execrabilem initiationem opponens, sus videlicet in cœno provoluta, sicut est in proverbio: manusque suas profanat, ut nimirum eas ab increunto sacrificio, per quod nos Christo ipsiusque passionibus et divinitati communicamus, elueret ac repurgaret." Orat. iii. p. 70. See also Bléterie, Vie de Julien, p. 116, &c.

P. 138. l. 1. *His first object was to rescue the Gentile religion from contempt.*] See Fabricii Lux Evangelii, (4to. 1731.) cap. 14. *de Apostasiâ et Persecutione Juliani Imp.* p. 294—326. containing some striking passages from Greg. Nazianzen and Sozomen.

Ibid. l. 11. *His letter to the chief priest of Galatia.*] " Τί οὖν ἡμεῖς οἰόμεθα ταῦτα ἀρκεῖν, οὐδὲ ἀποβλέπομεν ὁ μάλιστα τὴν ΑΘΕΟΤΗΤΑ συνηύξησεν, ἡ περὶ τοὺς ξένους φιλανθρωπία, καὶ ἡ περὶ τὰς ταφὰς τῶν νεκρῶν προμήθεια, καὶ ἡ πεπλασμένη σεμνότης κατὰ τὸν βίον; ὧν ἕκαστον οἴομαι χρῆναι παρ' ἡμῶν ἀληθῶς ἐπιτηδεύεσθαι. Sed quid est causæ, cur in hisce, perinde ac si nihil amplius opus esset, conquiescamus, ac non potiùs convertamus oculos ad ea quibus *impia Christianorum religio* creverit; id est, ad benignitatem in peregrinos, ad curam ab illis in mortuis sepeliendis positam, et ad sanctimoniam vitæ quam simulant? Quorum singula à nobis verè exsequenda esse censeo." Julian. Ep. 49. p. 429. edit. à Spanheim. Lips. fol. 1696. See also Cave's Lives of the Fathers, introd. to part. ii. p. 290.

Ibid. l. 15. *His next object was by ridicule to make Christianity appear contemptible.*] After making an ostentatious boast of his clemency towards the Galileans, Julian thus issues his orders for the confiscation of the whole property of the church of Edessa, in terms of sarcasm worthy of Mr. Gibbon himself, his admirer and panegyrist. " Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ θαυμασιωτάτου νόμου προείρηται, ἵν' εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν εὐοδώτερον πορευθῶσι, πρὸς τοῦτο συναγωνιζόμενοι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, αὐτῶν τὰ χρήματα τῆς Ἐδεσσηνῶν ἐκκλησίας ἅπαντα ἐκελεύσαμεν ἀναληφθῆναι, δοθησόμενα τοῖς στρατιώταις, καὶ τὰ κτήματα τοῖς ἡμετέροις προστεθῆναι πριβάτοις· ἵνα πενόμενοι σωφρονῶσι, καὶ μὴ στερηθῶσιν, ἧς ἔτι ἐλπίζουσιν, οὐρανίου βασιλείας. Quare quod ipsis à lege admirabili imperatum est, quo faciliùs in regnum cœlorum veniant, nos ad id hominibus opem tulimus, eorumque pecunias omnes ab Edessenorum Ecclesiâ tolli jussimus, ut militi dividantur, et facultates, ut nostris privatis attribuantur: quo illi pauperes facti sapiant, neque regno cœlesti, quod nunc etiam sperant, priventur." Epist. 43. p. 424. See also Greg. Naz. orat. 3. p. 81. Fabricii Lux Evang. p. 306. and Cave, as above, p. 441.

P. 139. l. 18. *Instead of extolling his liberality and moderation*, &c.] Libanius is profuse in his commendations on this head. Gibbon, however, seems to allow that Julian's moderation was *insidious*. His conduct towards that great luminary of the Church, St. Athanasius, sufficiently proves his acrimony and bitterness towards the

Christian religion, whenever he felt the cause of Heathenism to be really endangered. See Julian. Ep. 6, 46, 51. Cave's Life of St. Athanasius, sect. 13. p. 444, 445. and Greg. Naz. Orat. 3. p. 86—94. Respecting the whole of Julian's policy in his conduct towards the Christians, there are also some very just reflections in the Abbé Bléteric's Life of Julian, l. iii. p. 133—149. also in Cave, as above, p. 294.

P. 140. l. 28. *The preternatural events by which this project was frustrated*, &c.] See Fabric. Lux Ev. p. 125. where abundant proofs are collected, from Ammianus Marcellinus, St. Chrysostom. Theodoret, St. Cyril, Rufinus, and Julian himself. Bp. Warburton has fully collated these authorities, examined every circumstance relating to this memorable portion of history, and refuted, in the most convincing manner, the objections that have been advanced against the *miraculous* nature of the event. See his masterly work, entitled, " Julian," &c.

P. 141. l. 11. *To banish all learning from among Christians.*] See Julian. Ep. 42. Fabric. Lux Ev. p. 302. Cave, ut suprà, p. 296. Blétcric, Vie de Julien, p. 161—164. and Greg. Naz. Orat. 3. p. 97. et seq. where he inveighs against this conduct of Julian with admirable vivacity and force.

P. 142. l. 3. *Julian strove to ensnare Christians into acts of Heathen worship*, &c.] See Cave, ut suprà, p. 297. with the authorities there referred to, viz. Sozomen, Gregory Nazianzen, Theodoret, Chrysostom, and Maximus Tyrius.

Ibid. l. 19. *Julian was ambitious to distinguish himself as a writer against Christianity.*] A concise and clear epitome of St. Cyril's refutation of Julian is given in Houtteville's *Discourse on the Authors for and against Christianity*, p. 110 to 118, in which he remarks, that " it is certainly very happy for religion, that this book of St. Cyril is come down to us; otherwise it might be imagined, that this learned emperor would never have left the Christian religion he had been bred up in, had he not been induced by very sufficient reasons; and for some men this would have been a very decisive argument. But as we have his objections transmitted down to us, we see how they betray the weakness of infidelity, and strengthen so much more the cause of Truth." p. 118.

P. 148. l. 12. *A formal deputation was sent to Valentinian.*] See Cave's Life of St. Ambrose, sect. 3. p. 576, in which Symmachus's Address to the Emperor, and St. Ambrose's Reply, are given at large.

P. 149. l. 11. *well knowing that Heathenism would not stand the fiery ordeal, which Christianity had endured.*] See Jortin's Sermons, vol. vii. serm. 6. Gibbon acknowledges the same, (vol. v. p. 118. 8vo.) and reluctantly confesses the moderation and forbearance of the Christians towards their Heathen adversaries. Ibid. p. 121, 122. Respecting the persecuting disposition of the Heathen, see Bp. Watson's Apology for Christianity, letter 6.

P. 150. l. 24. *Many writers still continued their open attacks on the Gospel, as well as their endeavours to undermine it by false philosophy.*] See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. vi. par. i. ch. 2. sect. 1, 2.

P. 151. l. ult. *amongst whom, let us gratefully record the inhabitants of our own island.*] Although it was not till the latter end of the sixth century that Augustin the monk converted the British king, and (as Dr. Mosheim properly expresses it) "laid *anew* the foundations of the British Church;" yet it can hardly be doubted, that Christianity was introduced into this country at a much earlier period: and I readily concur in opinion with a learned friend (who has suggested to me the propriety of noticing the circumstance) that there is satisfactory evidence to prove that it was preached here in the time of the Apostles, and probably by St. Paul himself. For the ground of this opinion, the reader is referred to Stillingfleet's Origines Britannicæ, chap. 1. (folio, 1685.) where the point is largely discussed, and many authorities carefully examined. Bp. Lloyd, in his Hist. of Ch. Gov. in Great Britain, (8vo. 1684.) ch. ii. p. 48. affirms the same. Dr. Heylyn, in his Hist. of Episcopacy, par. ii. ch. 2. favours the opinion, that the Gospel was first planted in Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, and that St. Paul sent Aristobulus here to perfect the work which Joseph had begun. Mr. Archdeacon Churton, speaking of the early propagation of the Gospel, and of the labours of St. Paul in particular, says, "Whether he, or whether any of the twelve Apostles, visited Britain, cannot perhaps be determined with certainty;—but Claudia, whom he mentions, (2 Tim. iv. 21.) was most probably born in this island, and that the Gospel was preached here in the time of the Apostles is allowed on all hands; (vide Usher Brit. Eccl. Antiq. c. i. 111. (folio, 1687.) Spelman Concil. Orb. Brit. p. 1, &c.) and in the beginning of the third century, Tertullian informs us, (Adv. Jud. c. vii.) that even those parts of the island, which the Romans had not conquered, were, however, subject to Christ." Bampt. Lect. serm. 2. p. 76. (8vo. 1785.)

In addition to those above mentioned, the following

authors have been consulted on the subjects of this discourse; viz. The ecclesiastical historians, Spanheim, Fleury, Kortholt, and Dannenmayr.—Bullet on the Establishment of Christianity.—Kortholti Pagan. Obtrect.—Eunapii Vitæ Sophistarum—Athanasius contra Gentes.—Cudworth's Intellectual System.—Ogilvie on Scepticism and Infidelity.

SERMON VI.

P. 157. l. 1. *The best commentators are generally agreed, in applying this passage of Scripture to the impostor Mahomet*, &c.] See Poole's Synopsis, in locum. (5 vols. folio, 1684.) Pyle's Paraphrase. (8vo. 1735.) Lowman on the Revelation. Lancaster's Abridgment of Daubuz on the Revelation, p. 298—322. Wells on the Revelation, p. 60—70. (4to. 1728.) Mede. b. iii. p. 470. Whitaker's Commentary on the Revelation, sect. 7. p. 110—140. (8vo. 1802.) Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 98, &c. Bp. Halifax's Warb. Lect. p. 318. (8vo. 1776.) Bp. Bagot's Warb. Lect. p. 290. (8vo. 1780.) White's Bampt. Lect. p. 104. (8vo. 1784.) Kett's Hist. the Interpreter of Prophecy, vol. ii. ch. 2. (2 vols. 8vo. 1800.)

P. 160. l. 27. *The Christian Church had, for a great length of time, been miserably distracted by heresies and divisions.*] See the Ecclesiastical Histories of Mosheim, Spanheim, Kortholt, &c.; also Whitaker's Origin of Arianism; White's Bampt. Lect. serm. 2. p. 60—73.; and Hottingeri Hist. Orient. l. ii. c. 2. p. 219—235. 4to. 1651.

P. 163. l. 9. *According to the memorable prophecy concerning Ishmael and his posterity.*] See two important Discourses on this prophecy, in Dr. Worthington's Boyle's Lect. vol. i. disc. 11, 12. (2 vols. 8vo. 1768.)

P. 167. l. 3. *This similarity between the Jewish and Mahometan ceremonials has been illustrated by able writers.*] The learned Dr. Mills has proved this at large, in his elaborate dissertation "*de Mohammedismo ante Mohammedem.*" 4to. 1743. There are also many observations to the same effect interspersed in Sale's Notes on the Koran, and in Whitaker's Origin of Arianism, c. 4. sect. 4.

P. 168. l. 23. *The code of Mahometanism comprises almost every heterodox opinion respecting the Christian faith.*] See Whitaker, as above, p. 377—400. also Richardi *Confutatio Legis à Mahumete latæ*, ("a book," says Mr. Whitaker, "of great weight, written from a personal conversation with the Saracens, about 1210,") in which he shews, (cap. 1.) that the absurdities of Sabellius, Carpocrates, Macedonius, Nestorius, Cerinthus, the Ebionites, Nicolai-

tans, Anthropomorphites, Monophysites, and Manichees, are all scattered through the pages of the Koran. This valuable work was published at Basil in folio, 1543, by Theodore Bibliander, a learned divine of Zurich in Switzerland, together with Bibliander's Latin translation of the Koran; Philippi Melancthonis *ad Alcorani lectorem præmonitio*; Ludovici Vivis *de Mahomete et Alcorano censura*; Volaterranus *de Mahometo ejusque legibus*; Nicolai de Cusa *Cribrationum Alcorani* libri tres; Johannis Cantacuzeni *contra Mahometicam fidem Christiana et orthodoxa assertio*; several translations from Arabian writers of great repute among the Turks and Saracens; and many other curious treatises on the subject of Mahometanism. The work of Richardus is in the 2d part, from p. 83 to p. 166.

P. 169. l. 21. *He framed many of his tenets, so as to gratify those vicious propensities*, &c.] See Whitaker's Origin of Arianism, p. 361—376, who remarks that "the Temple of Mecca was a very temple of whoredoms," where the most abominable rites were, and are still performed, very similar to the ancient rites in the Temple of Venus, and, without doubt, originating in them. Nothing could be more adapted to the lustful dispositions of the Arabs, and of Mahomet in particular, who seems desirous of being regarded as preeminent in this respect, and to have been the more revered by his followers for being (as Mr. W. expresses it) "a *leader* in lustfulness, and the very *king* of *satyrs*." See also White's Bampt. Lect. serm. 4. p. 193—199.

P. 170. l. 7. *To this it has been well replied*, &c.] See White's B. Lect. serm. 4. p. 172—174. relating to the opportunities which Mahomet had of acquiring a knowledge of men and manners, by his commercial occupations.

Ibid. l. 17. *The astonishing ignorance, which he sometimes betrays, of the most remarkable facts and doctrines of Holy Writ.*] Many curious instances of this are noticed in Whitaker's Origin of Arianism, p. 336—347. "He became," says Mr. W. "the ignorant apostle of an ignorant nation. And he betrayed his ignorance in a form so very palpable and gross, upon his very Koran, as seems to be intended for the mint-mark of God himself, in order to shew the falsity of his inspiration to every eye. Even beneath his pretended inspirations, he was still so astonishingly ignorant, as not to know the difference between Mary the mother of our Lord, and Miriam the sister of Aaron." This and other proofs of Mahomet's gross anachronisms and ignorance of history, Mr. Whitaker ably maintains, against the fraudulent arts of Du Ryer, in his

French translation of the Koran, to suppress them, and the sophistical attempts of Mr. Sale, our English translator and commentator, to soften or explain them away.

P. 170. l. 24. *That he was assisted in framing the Koran, by a Persian Jew and a renegado Christian.*] See Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 24. and D'Herbelot's Biblioth. Orient. *Alcoran.* p. 82. fol. edit[1].

P. 171. l. 12. *To the power of working miracles he made no pretension.*] "Est considerandum, quòd neque Alcoranum est lex Dei, quæ miraculis confirmetur, neque Mahometus est apostolus Dei; nullum enim *miraculum* hoc testatur....Si autem dicant Saraceni, multa et magna miracula fecisse Mahometum, sicut reintegrare lunam divisam, et fontem aquæ ex ejus digitis defluxisse: fabula est hoc et contrarium eidem Alcorano. Prohibet enim Mahometus de eo aliquid tale credere, præterquam quæ scripta sunt in Alcorano...Ille enim cùm miracula non fecisset, et hoc ostendere volens, inducit Deum loquentem et dicentem, Dixit Dominus ad me, Propter hoc miracula te facere non permitto, ne tibi propter miracula eveniat quod et aliis prophetis accidit. Suo ipsius igitur testimonio convincitur nullum signum fecisse. Ipse enim Mahometus continuè in Alcorano dicit, quòd cùm homines ei dicerent, Ostende aliquod signum, sicut Moyses venit cum signis, et alii scilicet, et Christus, et alii prophetæ fecerunt: respondit, quòd Moyses et Prophetæ missi sunt à Deo; et maximè Christus, qui in maximis prodigiis venit, et mundus non credidit his, sed dixit hos veneficos et incantatores esse. Propter hoc Deus non permisit mihi facere miracula, non enim credidissent. Sed veni in potentiâ armorum." Richardi Confut. cap. 7. p. 106. Respecting the ridiculous story of his vision and journey to Heaven, the same author acutely remarks, "Hæc sola fictio visionis prædictæ debet sufficere ad confutandum quicquid dixit et fecit Mahometus. Sicut enim sæpenumero antè dictum est, sic permisit eum Spiritus sanctus mentiri, ut quilibet homo facilè figmentum cognosceret. Nunc quidem dicit de seipso inaudita mira-

[1] Richardus gives this account of its origin. "Et quia idiota erat, et illiteratus, dedit ei diabolus socios proprios, et quosdam hæreticos et Judæos, et Christianos similiter hæreticos. Adhæsit enim ei quidam Jacobita, nomine Baira, et duravit cum Mahometo usque ad mortem. Ferturque, quòd Mahometus postea interfecit. Sed et Judæi quidam, Phinees videlicet, et Audia, nomine Salon, post hæc autem Audala dictus, et Selem: qui etiam facti sunt Saraceni. Et quidam Nestoriani, qui maximè cum Saracenis conveniunt, dicentes quòd Deus non est natus de beatâ Virgine, sed homo Jesus Christus. Et tunc composuit Mahometus quædam in modum legis, per socios, assumens quædam quidem à Veteri, quædam autem à Novo Testamento." Confutatio Mahum. c. 13. p. 140.

cula, aliquando autem dicit se nullum miraculum fecisse; et aliquando dicit, quòd est solùm nuncius et homo: aliquando verò, quòd et plus est quàm angelus, et supra angelos." Ibid. c. 14. p. 146.

"Alchoranus autem nullo unquam Dei miraculo fuit comprobatus esse divinus. Nec aliquando Mahomet divinum miraculum ostendit. Hoc autem non ego effingo, sed ipsemet Alchoranus testatur, propterea plerosque Mahometo, et scripturis, quas ille tradebat, non credidisse, quia nullum perpetraret miraculum."——"Ipse verò Mahomet semper diversas excogitabat excusationes. Nunc asserens, miracula ad nihilum proficere; sed tantummodo Dei cooperationem requiri.....Nunc dicens quòd fides non esset meritoria apud Deum, visis miraculis.....Aliam excusationem affert, c. vii. lib. iii. cui titulus est, *De Alchorano*, ubi post medium cap. Deum inducit his verbis sibi loquentem, *Et non misimus te, nisi annuntiatorem bonorum, et comminatorem pœnæ.* Hujusmodi et similibus responsionibus sæpe se excusabat, non esse à Deo se missum ad faciendum miracula, sed tantùm ad prædicandum, et justis pollicendum præmia, impiis verò comminandum pœnas et tormenta. At frivola responsio est. Hoc enim erat quod petebatur, scilicet, Quonam signo, quonam miraculo, se à Deo missum significaret? Quomodo se Apostolum Dei probaret, cùm chirographum suæ delegationis divino munitum sigillo non ostenderet? Est autem Dei sigillum miraculum. Quis autem crederet alicui se Imperatoris delegatum esse dicenti, nisi Imperatorias literas, Imperatoris sigillo munitas, ostenderet, quas secum deferret? Christus, Moyses, et Apostoli, cùm se à Deo missos dicerent, miracula perpetrabant, et sic delegatorias literas, Divino sigillo munitas, ostendebant. At Mahomet refugit ostendere novum genus Prophetiæ, novum genus delegationis, quo quis, sine delegatoriis literis, audet se jactare delegatum. Agnoscebat quidem ejusmodi defectum gravissimum esse Mahomet, et tantæ gravitatis, ut se deprehendendum facilè vereretur, nisi miraculorum subsidium aliquo modo sibi emendicaret: et propterea, si non poterat factis ostendere vera, excogitavit saltem verbis ficta referre: unde, cap. *De Lunâ*, refert, initio capitis, se quoddam miraculum in Lunâ perpetrâsse.....Et cap. *De Stellâ*, refert alterum miraculum, de suâ ascensione in cœlum, usque ad Deum.....Ejusmodi miracula, et his similia alia aliqua referunt *Alchoranus*, liber *Sonnat*, et liber *Agar*, aliique Mahometanorum libri: miracula quidem, nemine teste nisi tantùm ipso Mahomet, perpetrata.....Sed et præter ea quæ diximus, hanc aliam excusationem affert,

cap. *De Tonitruo*:—'*Etiamsi per Alchoranum incederent montes, et dehisceret terra, aut loquerentur mortui; nihilominus Deo repositum est omne negotium.*' Scilicet, non propterea crederent, nisi Deus illis gratiam infunderet ad credendum.....Ecce quomodo semper diversas excusationes causabatur, miraculorum detrectans experimentum, fidemque gratis exigens, et miracula à nullo visa jactans." Guadagnoli *Apologia pro Christianâ Religione, contra Objectiones Ahmed Filii Zin Alabedin, Persæ Asphahensis*, 4to. Romæ 1631. tractat. ii. cap. 2. sect. ii. p. 161—174. This very curious and valuable work was written in answer to a book against Christianity, and in defence of Mahometanism, composed by Ahmed Ebn Zin, a Persian nobleman, and sent to Rome, with a challenge to the Pope to answer it. Guadagnoli was appointed to refute it, and his Apology is a very able performance.

On the whole, it is evident that Mahomet expressly *disclaimed* any pretensions to miracles, although he suffered, and perhaps set on foot, ridiculous stories of his occasional performance of them. His *inconsistency*, however, on this point, is (as Richardus shrewdly argues, in the passage above quoted) a sufficient assurance that none were really wrought by him, and that he did not dare to rest the credibility of his religion, or his claims to a divine mission, upon any proofs so precarious and ill-founded. See further on this subject, Pfeifferi *Theol. Jud. et Mohammedic.* exercit. vi. th. 4. 5.—Hottingeri Hist. Orient. lib. ii. c. 5. §. 6. p. 291—303. Mornæi de Verit. Rel. Christ. c. 33. p. 551.

P. 172. l. 4. *which, in the course of eighty years, extended further than the Roman empire had done in 800 years.*] Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 79. Fabricii Lux Evang.

P. 173. l. 7. *The complacency with which modern Deists and Socinians appear to regard the Koran.*] Gibbon, Voltaire, Boulainvilliers, Bayle, Mercier, Chubb, Condorcet, &c. take frequent opportunities of representing Mahomet and his religion in the most favourable point of view, and extolling it at the expense of Christianity. Mr. Whitaker thus severely, but justly, animadverts on Mr. Gibbon's efforts in favour of Mahometanism. "He has endeavoured to tear away the rags from the malkin of Mahometanism, and to dress it up in a holiday suit of his own. But he has made himself the very Mahomet of history by the attempt: an *impostor* in facts, a *satyr* in lechery; wounding himself severely with the very point of his own *contradictions*; and yet staggering eagerly forward, to put himself at the head of the *enemies of*

Christ. Nor let the reader be surprised at my speaking so strongly against a man whom I was once proud to call my friend. I honour his splendid abilities; but I must for ever protest against his anti-christian application of them. And I wish to bear my testimony upon every occasion, against that muddy inundation of folly and of falsehood which the unhappy dexterity of his hand has let loose upon the Christian world. Never perhaps was literature more the impudent pander of sensuality, and never was reason perhaps more the falsifying slave of unbelief, than in his well-known History." See Origin of Arianism, p. 360. There are also some important strictures on this part of Mr. Gibbon's Hist. in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge by the late Dr. Disney, rector of Pluckley in Kent, 4to.

Respecting the favourable opinion which *Socinians* have entertained of Mahometanism, see Leslie's Preface to his Dialogues on the Socinian Controversy, with an Epistle of the Unitarians to the Morocco Embassador, and two Letters by Leslie on the occasion, subjoined to it. Leslie's Works, fol. vol. i. p. 205, &c. The authenticity of this epistle, or address, has been clearly proved by Bp. Horsley, (in his Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley, p. 272, 273.) from documents in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth.

P. 173. l. 16. *But some writers, not apparently of this description*, &c.] Mr. Sale, in his Preface to the Koran, p. 52, &c. and in several of his notes, discovers a very undue partiality for the work and its author, and does not escape merited chastisement from Mr. Whitaker, who occasionally glances at his "friendship for the Koran," and notices his endeavours "disingenuously to soften away" its falsehoods and absurdities. Mosheim also seems inclined to apologise for Mahomet, much beyond what the truth of the case will warrant. See his Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 8. 8vo. edit. 1768.

P. 176. l. 19. *His pretence that these Scriptures had been mutilated*, &c.] It is worthy of observation, that Mahomet rests his pretensions chiefly on the *imperfection* of those very Scriptures which he professes to believe as of Divine authority. He relies, too, solely on what they have *omitted*, or what he supposes to have been *expunged* from them, not on what they really contain: so that the evidence he would draw from them is altogether of a *negative* kind.

P. 177. l. 13. *Yet even in this boasted performance are found inconsistencies and contradictions of so glaring*

a nature, that it's author was obliged to have recourse to the convenient doctrine of Abrogation.) Many instances of this kind are pointed out in Whitaker's Orig. of Ar. p. 378—388. The impudent doctrine of *Abrogation*, so blasphemous in its tendency, and used by the Impostor merely as an instrument to promote his own fraudulent and licentious views, is admirably exposed by Whitaker, who shews the utter impossibility of reducing it to a practice, so as to ascertain what is prohibited or enjoined. See as above, p. 350—360. On the inconsistencies and contradictions of the Koran, see also Guadagnoli Apolog. pro Christian. Rel. p. 253—257. 269—274. 284—296. Richardi Confut. Mahum. cap. 6: and White's Bamp. Lect. p. 359.

P. 177. l. 24. *In this volume of perfection are advanced, for instance, the following assertions*, &c.] These are but a small number of the gross fictions and absurdities which have been collected from the Koran, by writers who have carefully examined it's contents. See Richardi Confut. Mahum. c. 9. Guadagnoli Apol. ut. suprà: and Kortholt. de Rel. Muham. p. 56—64. 4to. 1665.

P. 178. l. 11. *It is also intimated, that all men were originally of one and the same religion, but that God purposely caused and ordained them to be of different religions.*] See Richardi Conf. Mah. p. 113. A sentiment of this kind, though not always so directly avowed, may be discovered in almost all infidel, heretical, and schismatical writers, who seem to consider the Almighty as delighted with varieties of opinion and sundry modes of worship, however inconsistent with each other or repugnant to the fundamental truths of religion. This (if I recollect rightly) is one of the notable arguments urged by the mischievous author of *The Age of Reason*, in support of his libertine principles: and it is couched under all the specious theories of liberality of sentiment and freedom of religious opinion, which have of late years issued from the press, and which, in the present day, are even recommended to us as forming a proper basis for a system of *national education*. I cannot, however, help considering this sentiment as originating either in the grossest ignorance of the first principles of true Religion, which is founded on the *declared will of God*; or in an utter indifference to religion of any kind; or, (as in the case of Mahomet, and, perhaps, of Infidels in general,) in a wilful contempt of the divine law, and a wicked desire to prevail upon men to set up their own devices in opposition to their Maker.

P. 180. l. 26. *its doctrine of absolute and unqualified Predestination.*] "We condemn it as an error in the Turk," says the learned Dr. T. Jackson, in his Works, vol. iii. p. 183. "for measuring the difference between good and evil, by the *event*. But even this error hath an *original*, which is worse. They therefore measure all good and evil by the *event*, *because* they ascribe all *events*, without exception, to the *irresistible will of God*; and think that nothing can fall out otherwise than it doth, because every thing is irresistibly appointed by God's will, which, in their divinity, is *a necessary cause of causes*, and, by consequence, of all *effects*." See also Ricaut's Hist. of the Ottoman Empire. Reland, however, in his book De Rel. Moham. l. ii. §. 4. endeavours to repel from Mahometanism the charge of making God the author of Evil; or rather seems to *vindicate* the doctrine itself, as congenial with his own sentiments. "Nescio," says he, "cur se *nobis* opponent, quoniam fateri debent Deum ab æterno certissimè præscivisse hos et illos homines eo modo et loco et tempore peccaturos; *quo ipso clarum est homines aliter non posse*, si certò illas actiones Deus præscivit," p. 153. It is to be observed, however, that the Mahometans are much divided among themselves, on the subjects of Providence and the Divine Decrees. See Hottinger's Hist. Orient. l. ii. c. 6. *De variis Muhammedanorum sententiis, schismatis, et hæresibus*, p. 349—353.

P. 181. l. 10. *The gross and unhallowed representations of the Mahometan Paradise.*] See Whitaker, as above, p. 368—375. with the note, p. 372. on the attempts of Mr. Sale and Mr. Gibbon to represent the Mahometan Paradise as admitting of *spiritual* as well as *sensual* pleasures. Mr. W.'s animadversions will apply with equal justice to Reland in his chapter *De Paradiso Mohammedico*, who, on this as well as on some other points, seems too much inclined to be the *Apologist* of the Impostor.

P. 182. l. 14. *The unsupported assertion of a bold adventurer*, &c.] It appears that Mahometans never go beyond the Koran for arguments to vindicate their religion. They attempt not to support it by *collateral* testimonies of any kind, but rest entirely on the *ipse dixit* of Mahomet itself, unaccompanied with any one clear proof of Divine authority. "Universa fides Muhammedana ultimò in hoc principium resolvitur: *Quidquid Alcoranus dicit, id solum, hodiè quidem, infallibiliter verum est, et ad salutem impetrandam cognitu necessarium.*" Kortholt. de Rel. Muham. p. 37.

P. 185. l. 3. *It makes no provision for man's redemption.*] "Quid aliud dicit Mahometus, quàm quod ethnicæ religiones tradebant? Nihil adfirmat de remissione peccato-

rum; evomit blasphemias in Filium Dei; non docet quid sit peccatum; non monstrat causas humanarum calamitatum; nihil potest dicere de verâ invocatione in fide; denique, eam doctrinam, quæ propria est Evangelii, totam abjicit. Ideo facilè potest intelligi, et pugnare Mahometum cum primâ doctrinâ traditâ per Prophetas et Apostolos, et tantùm particulam doctrinæ rationis humanæ de lege, seu de moribus, retinere, in quâ ipsâ tamen multa insunt fœda, et ad barbaras illas nationes conjungendas accommodata, inter quas primùm exarsit hoc incendium." Philippi Melancthonis *ad Alcorani Lectorem Præmonitio*, p. 1. in Bibliander's Collection above mentioned.

P. 189. l. 8. *God saw fit to permit them to do so, for the chastisement of his lukewarm and unfaithful people.*] "Est igitur Mahometi secta confusio quædam ex blasphemiis, latrociniis, et flagitiosis libidinibus conflata. Hæ sunt manifestæ notæ diaboli, quæ deterrere homines debent, etiamsi propter regni potentiam, victorias, et successuum magnitudinem levia ingenia minùs abhorrent à tantâ impietate. Sed Christianos scire oportet, Ecclesiam in hâc subjectam esse cruci, et sæpe imperia fuisse penès impias gentes.... Illud postremò cogitandum est, quanta sit ira Dei, qui propter impietatem hominum sinit grassari hanc teterrimam pestem, et verè subjicit orbem terrarum regi pessimo. Hanc iram pii deplorent, et suâ pœnitentiâ et precibus lenire studeant." Ph. Melancthon. ut suprà, p. 2. See also Kett's History the Interpreter of Prophecy, vol. ii. p. 265—294.

The following authors, on the subject of this Discourse, have also been consulted: viz. Kortholti Hist. Eccl.—Spanhemii Introd. ad Hist. Eccl.—Hoornbeckii *Summa Controversiarum*, lib. 3.—Sylburgii *Saracenica et Moametica*, 12mo. 1595.—Fabricii de Verit. Rel. Chr. cap. 50.—Grotii de Verit. Rel. Chr. l. 6.—Barthol. Edesseni *Confutatio Hagareni*, et *contra Muhammed*, in Le Moyne's Varia Sacra, vol. i. 4to. 1685.—Reimanni Hist. Atheismi et Atheorum, sect. ii. cap. 9, et sect. 4.—Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. i. part iii. ch. 6—9.

SERMON VII.

P. 196. l. 24. *Through the medium of Popery, the Church was still preserved.*] "We, who believe the Divine declarations and promises to intimate and assure the perpetuated succession of a ministry, with regular appointment and transmitted claims, have certainly sufficient ground to maintain their completion in the unbroken continuance of the sacred orders. Still, indeed, we must admit the gra-

dual degeneracy of those orders into blind and deceitful guides; so far only directed by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, as rendered subservient to preserve the fundamental doctrines of religion, mingled, in external profession, with the grossest errors; and to support and transmit the rights of the spiritual authority. The ostensible pillars, and the visible representatives of the Christian ministry, they doubtless were: and, as members of the sacred lineage, transferred to their followers the privileges and functions of their appointed office.....The degeneracy of those who have transmitted a derived power, can furnish no sufficient objection to the validity of its communications; nor was the effect of Christ's ordinance done away by their wickedness, except as the doctrines of Revelation were perverted in accommodation to corrupt manners." Gray's Bampt. Lect. serm. 5. p. 196. 198.

P. 198. l. ult. *An attempt was made to identify powers, which are perfectly distinct from each other.*] Nothing is of greater consequence to the stability both of civil and ecclesiastical authority, than rightly ascertaining the grounds on which they respectively rest. That *both* powers are ordained of God is unquestionably true. But the line which marks the boundaries of each is easy to be discerned. No *temporal* potentate on earth can confer *spiritual* powers, any more than the *Ecclesiastical* body can give laws to the body *politic*. But both are evidently designed to *co-operate* with each other, because both relate to interests common to all men. Their *distinct* provinces were strikingly exemplified during the three first centuries of Christianity, including the period in which our Lord and his Apostles exercised their ministry, unsanctioned, nay, opposed and persecuted, by the civil power. Their capability of *union* and *co-operation* was manifested in the following ages, from Constantine to Justinian: nor was it till the *abuse* of both, occasioned by the usurpations of the pontiffs on the one hand, and the encroachments of princes on the other, that their respective rights and limits were ever called in question. Since that period, however, the interests of Religion and Government have been frequently shaken by the struggle maintained between these conflicting powers, which, instead of mutually aiding, have been employed in mutually harassing and depressing each other, to the great detriment of Christianity itself, which has thus been rendered a by-word and reproach among its enemies. See some important observations on this subject, extracted from Fleury's Eccl. Hist. in Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 100—108. and p. 138—148. See also Gray's Bampt. Lect. serm. 3.

P. 199. l. 18. *Infidelity, in later times, has been employed in endeavouring to subvert Christianity, by first merging its authority in that of the State.*] Hobbes, in the 17th century, made this the foundation of his grand attack upon the Christian religion; which he endeavoured to subvert, by inculcating that all religion depended on the civil power, and had no other claim to respect and obedience than as being sanctioned by the will of the magistrate. The deists of the last century almost all argue upon the same principle, though not so openly avowed. The French revolutionists effected their diabolical purpose by similar means: and to this day, scarcely any attack is made upon Revealed Religion, which does not proceed upon the implied principle that Religion is purely a creature of the State, a political engine for keeping mankind in subjection, and which may be lawfully upholden or overthrown at pleasure, by the civil power.

P. 200. l. 13. *The conversion of several barbarous nations*, &c.] Mosheim observes, that "the reign of Charlemagne had been singularly auspicious to the Christian cause;" but that "his piety was mixed with violence, his spiritual conquests were generally made by the force of arms; and this impure mixture tarnishes the lustre of his noblest exploits." Cent. ix. part i. c. 1. See also cent. xii. part i. c. 1.

Ibid. l. ult. *Crusades or holy wars.*] See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. xi. part i. ch. 1. §. 4—10. and cent. xiii. part i. ch. 1. §. 3—8. Kortholti Eccl. Hist. sæc. xi. p. 431. and sæc. xiii. p. 538, 539. Dannenmayr Inst. Eccl. Hist. period. iv. cap. i. §. 12. Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist. vol. v. p. 388—458. containing a Discourse on the Croisades by Cardinal Fleury.

P. 201. l. 25. *the conduct of Christian states towards Heathens, Saracens, or Jews.*] The violent conversions of several of the Northern nations of Europe, in the 12th and 13th centuries, and the cruel treatment of the Saracens and the Jews, on their expulsion from Spain in the 15th century, are among the most disgraceful of these transactions. The terrors of the Inquisition were applied to the Jews in particular with the most sanguinary and vindictive spirit.

P. 202. l. ult. *For one entire century the Church was divided between the advocates and the opponents of image-worship.*] This controversy occupied the whole of the eighth century, and part of the ninth. See Mosheim, cent. viii. part ii. ch. 3. §. 9—14. and cent. ix. part ii. ch. 3. §. 14—17.

P. 203. l. 10. *Predestination.*] In the year 847, the Saxon monk Godeschalcus maintained the doctrine of predestination in its most rigid sense, as since professed by Calvin

and his disciples; and was zealously opposed by Rabanus Maurus, and Hincmar archbishop of Rheims. His tenets, as quoted by Kortholt, from Hincmar's Letter to Pope Nicholas, were as follows:—"1. Deum, sicuti quosdam prædestinavit ad vitam æternam; sic et alios ad mortem æternam prædestinâsse. 2. Deum non velle omnes homines salvos fieri, sed duntaxat eos qui salvantur. 3. Christum salvatorem nostrum non fuisse crucifixum neque mortuum pro redemptione totius mundi, hoc est, pro redemptione et salute omnium hominum, sed tantùm pro his qui salvantur. 4. Diabolum non posse ad se rapere unum eorum, pro cujus redemptione Deo patri suo Dominus sanguinem suum pretiosum effudit." Eccl. Hist. p. 335. See also Mosheim, cent. ix. part ii. ch. 3. §. 22—24.

P. 203. l. 11. *Transubstantiation.*] It was not till the Council of the Lateran, held by Innocent the Third, in the year 1215, that this doctrine was imposed as an article of faith, and the use of the term *Transubstantiation* authoritatively introduced. See Mosheim, cent. xiii. part ii. ch. 3. §. 2. But it was in the 9th century that the controversy, *Concerning the manner in which the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist*, was vehemently agitated between Pascasius Radbert, a monk, who contended for the absolute transmutation of the elements, and Bertram, Johannes Scotus, Rabanus Maurus, and others, who opposed this doctrine as heretical and erroneous. See Mosheim, cent. ix. part ii. ch. 3. sect. 19—21. Kortholt. p. 358.

Ibid. l. 16. *Pope Nicholas.*] "Nicolaus I. totus in eo fuit, ut papalem dignitatem ex quâvis occasione augeret. Pontificem à Constantino Deum appellatum, Deum autem ab hominibus non posse judicari manifestum esse ait, in Epistolâ ad Michaelem Imperatorem, tom. iii. concil. p. 924. Ex quâ hæc decreto suo inseruit Gratianus, dist. 96. can. *satis evidenter*. Primam sedem (*Romanam* sc.) à nullo vult judicari, ejusque judicium à nemine debere tractari, neque cuiquam de ejus licere judicare judicio, totidem verbis statuit, dist. 21. can. 4, 5, et seq. et causâ 9. qu. 3. can. *patet profecto*. Ut adeò ex re et vero scripserit Regino, lib. ii. ad annum 868, Nicolaum hunc regibus et tyrannis imperâsse, eisque, ac si Dominus orbis terrarum, auctoritate præfuisse." Kortholti Eccl. Hist. p. 341. "Nicolaus I. eò superbiæ et impudentiæ processit, ut papam Deum, Deum autem ab hominibus judicari non posse dixerit, et jus in reges et exteros episcopos sibi arrogârit." Ibid. p. 365. See also Fox's Acts and Monuments, 9th edition, vol. i. p. 887, containing an abstract of popish decrees, relative to the authority of the pontificate; in

which pope Nicholas makes a conspicuous figure, though not more so, perhaps, than some of his successors in the papal see.

P. 205. l. 6. *Platonism, with a corrupt mixture of Oriental learning, was much esteemed even by the Fathers of the Church.*] "Quanquam nullam sectam Christianæ civitatis proceres probabant, et in quâvis detestabiles errores configebant, certum tamen illis visum est, sectarum discrimen esse habendum, unamque, præ aliis, veritatis semina et vestigia plura vel pauciora servavisse, minúsque vel magis ea propriæ stultitiæ cogitationibus suppressisse. Plurimùm autem infensi erant systemati *Peripatetico*, ob perniciosissimos errores, v. c. negatam divinam providentiam, cavillationes logicas, quibus mirè orthodoxos hæretici vexabant, assertas, mundi æternitatem, et alia.—Faventiores autem Christianos experta est philosophia *Platonica*. Cujus quidem errores haud paucos reprehendebant, et interdum gravem illi dicam scribebant, nec toti systemati Platonico subscribere Christianum posse statuebant: ut longè plura tamen, quàm inter reliquas sectas, veritatis reliquias et dogmata puriora apud Platonem reperiri sibi persuadebant, ideòque magnis illum laudibus interdum extollebant, eò quod omnium optimè, quantum ab homine gentili expectari possit, de Deo divinisque philosophatus esset, et omnium plurima veritatis divinioris asserta conservavisset, cùm hæc partim à Pythagorâ, in itinere Orientali ab Hebræis edocto, didicisset, partim à Judæis, et ex lege divinâ in Ægypto inspectâ, accepisset. Manum enim dederant Judaico præjudicio, philosophiam ab Hebræis ad gentiles pervenisse. In quâ opinione eos mirè confirmavit mutatus philosophiæ Platonicæ vultus, syncretistico quod passa est in Ægypto studio. Cùm enim, dimisso systemate dualistico, emanativum Platonici recepissent, et Orientali doctrinæ assimilavissent, multa comtiorem, quàm priùs, faciem externè referebant, quæ velut saniora deinceps patres receperunt." Bruckeri Inst. Hist. Philos. Lipsiæ, 8vo. 1747. per. ii. part. ii. l. i. c. 2. §. 8.

P. 206. l. 5. *But about the beginning of the seventh century, a new turn was given to the pursuits of philosophy.*] "Exspiravit seculo septimo philosophia Platonico-Alexandrina sive Eclectica inter gentiles.—Extra monasteria verò ab eo tempore Aristotelica philosophia caput efferre cœpit, cùm hactenus, ob hæreticorum circa eam studium usumque in debellandis orthodoxis, valdè contemta jacuisset, vel syncretismo Alexandrino fuisset corrupta. Hanc enim, suis quoque partibus, utilitatem Aristotelem præstare posse, purioris doctrinæ asseclæ judicabant. Qui cùm viderent

errores haud paucos ex Platonicâ philosophiâ prorepsisse, magno autem Origenianæ factionis odio ducerentur, plurimum inde incrementorum cœpit philosophia Peripatetica. At methodi elegantiâ et ordine ea se quoque commendabat; traducta itaque ad theologiam est, et multâ diligentiâ culta, (Platonismo in monasteria relegato) ex quibus, circa restitutionem scientiarum demum in Italiâ, in lucem publicam iterum prorepsit. Qui itaque in Græciâ, ævo medio, philosophiæ operam dederunt, plerique Peripatetici, pauci Alexandrini Platonici sunt." Brucker, per. ii. part. ii. l. ii. c. 1. §. 2.

P. 206. l. 13. *The Saracens appear to have been the first who revived the Aristotelian system.*] Vide Brucker, ut suprà, per. ii. part. i. l. iii. c. 2. *De Naturâ et Indole Philosophiæ Saracenicæ.* Also Buddei Elementa Philosophiæ. Halæ Saxon. 12mo. 1725. tom. i. cap. 5. *De Philosophiâ Medii Ævi Arabico-Scholasticâ.*

P. 207. l. 4. *From this system sprang the celebrated Scholastic philosophy of those times.*] "Tandem relictâ simplici ac puriori veterum doctrinâ, in scholis Christianis penè unicè regnavit scholastica theologia; advocatâ in subsidium Aristotelis philosophiâ; eâque non ex Græcis fontibus, sed ex turbidis Arabum lacunis, ex versionibus malè factis, malè intellectis, haustâ." Cave, Hist. Lit. tom. ii. p. 276. "Ita verò, cùm Saracenicæ philosophiæ admiratio irreperet, omnia quoque vitia Scholasticæ illius disciplinæ, quæ inter Arabes viguit, simul ingrediendi occasionem habuerunt. Quæ cùm insanienti dialecticæ studio conjuncta ad sacras disciplinas traducerentur, tandem monstrum illud philosophiæ et theologiæ scholasticæ pepererunt, ingeniisque lascivientibus et luxuriantibus habenas relaxârunt, ut metaphysicas et dialecticas disputationes ad sacrum argumentum adhibendo, novas et periculosas opiniones disseminarent." Brucker, per. ii. part. ii. l. ii. c. 3. *De Philosophiâ Scholasticâ.* This chapter, which is divided into three sections, treats at large of the state of philosophy, from the 12th to the 15th century; gives a concise but full account of the most celebrated Scholastic writers; and takes a comprehensive view of their mode of philosophizing, and the influence of their tenets upon the study of theology. See also Gale's Court of the Gentiles, part iii. p. 154—163.

Ibid. l. 7. *was probably introduced for the purpose of defending the various corruptions and superstitions of the Church of Rome.*] "Quantum ad plura Romanæ ecclesiæ placita stabilienda contulerit nova hæc scholastica theologia, cæcus sit, oportet, qui non videt. Certè non minùs quàm majestatis pontificiæ auctoritatem longè latèque pro-

moverit jus canonicum, eodem ferè tempore natum, iisdemque incrementis auctum." Cave, Hist. Lit. tom. ii. p. 276. It is worthy, however, of remark, that the Roman pontifical power eventually suffered considerable injury and diminution from the very means which it had employed for its aggrandizement: since some of these disputatious Schoolmen contributed not a little to create a mistrust of the justice of the papal pretensions, and to bring them into disrepute. Luther himself was one of the ablest and acutest of the School-divines.

P. 207. l. 14. *Among these Scholastics, however, were men of distinguished talents*, &c.] "Solent *tres* Scholasticorum constitui *ætates*. *Prima* à Lanfranco, vel, ut alii volunt, à Petro Lombardo, qui circa finem seculi xi. floruit, incipit, et duravit usque ad Albertum M. qui circa medium seculi xiii. claruit. Eminuit præ cæteris in hâc classe Alexander ab Ales. *Secunda* ætas ab Alberto M. incipit, et duravit usque ad Durandum de S. Portiano, qui in initio seculi xiv. floruit. Nobilitârunt hanc ætatem maximè Thomas de Aquino, et Johannes Duns Scotus, quorum peculiares veluti sectas constituerunt discipuli. *Tertia* ætas, in quâ magnam celebritatem consecuti sunt Gulielmus Occam et Gabriel Biel, à Durando incipit, et duravit usque ad felicissimam Ecclesiæ reformationem: licèt nec postea defuerint, imò nec hodiè desint, tum inter pontificios, tum inter protestantes, qui hâc philosophandi ratione delectentur." Buddei Elem. Philos. ut suprà, c. v. §. 6. See also Brucker, ut suprà. Dannenmayr, Hist. Eccl. per. iv. c. iii. iv. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. Index. art. *Scholastics*.—Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 375—385. Harris's Philological Inquiries. Cave's Hist. Lit. tom. ii. p. 275. It is remarkable, that among the high-sounding titles bestowed upon the doctors of this admired Scholastic theology, (such as the Irrefragable, the Admirable, the Immortal, the most Resolute, the Calculator, the Light of the World, the Master of Contradictions, the Flower of the World, and the like,) we meet with only one who was dignified with the appellation of *the plain and perspicuous doctor*, and he (to the credit of our country be it remembered) was an Englishman. "His addimus," says Brucker, "*Gualterum Burlæum*, *Anglum*, Occami apud Scotum condiscipulum, et post hæc sectatorem, et præclarum eâ ætate Oxoniensis scholæ doctorem, qui *plani et perspicui* nomen obtinuit." Inst. Philos. per. ii. par. ii. l. ii. c. 3. §. 23.

P. 208. l. 14. *they were employed chiefly upon what the Apostle calls "foolish questions" which "gender strifes;" fond of logomachies*, &c.] "In *dogmatibus scholasticorum* hoc

maximè observandum, quòd circa inutilia, futilia, merasque λογομαχίας fuerint occupati. Logicæ et metaphysicæ maximum statuerunt pretium. Hinc de prædicamentis, prædicabilibusque, ad nauseam usque disputant, quemadmodum et de principio individuationis, de radice futuritionis, de suppositalitate, et personalitate, et ejusmodi infinitis nugis, valdè fuere soliciti. Sic et physicam ferè totam in metaphysicam converterunt; sitne physica ars, an scientia? deturne motus ad substantiam? sitne generatio motus, necne? acriter disputantes. In ceteris Aristotelem secuti sunt, certè sequi voluerunt. In *morali* autem *doctrinâ*, cùm Aristoteles solus iis non sufficeret, ex Aristotele, Scripturâ sacrâ, jure civile et canonico, confusum quid atque commixtum effecerunt, certis principiis non insistentes, conclusionum autem et casuum infinitam excogitantes multitudinem, in quibus solvendis et dilucidandis mirificè desudant." Buddeus, ut suprà, tom. i. c. v. §. 8, 9. "Neglecto sacrarum literarum studio, philosophiæ Aristotelicæ, et parum intellectæ, et per Arabes etiam adulteratæ, principiis magnam partem niterentur, in quæstionibus abstractis, otiosis, et non rarò ridiculis, egregiè sibi placerent, atque dictionis barbarie elegantiori lectori nauseam crearent." Dannenmayr, ut suprà, per. iv. c. iv. §. 2. The pernicious effect of this disputations turn on the study of *morality*, in particular, is thus described by Cardinal Fleury, as quoted in Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 438. "Morality was discussed in the schools, as other parts of theology, more by *ratiocination* than by *authority;* and in a *problematical* way, by calling in question every thing, even the clearest truths; whence in time proceeded so many decisions of the casuists, remote not only from the purity of the Gospel, but from the dictates of common sense. For in points of this kind what lengths will not those persons run, who use such a licentious way of reasoning? Now, the casuists were more employed in describing the *nature* of sins, than in shewing their *remedies*. They were principally occupied in deciding which are mortal sins, and in distinguishing to which virtue each sin was opposite, whether to justice, prudence, or temperance. They seem to have studied how to bring down sins to the lowest degree of guilt, and to justify many actions which the ancients, less subtle but more sincere, judged to be criminal."

P. 210. l. 4. *the dangerous position, that opinions might be philosophically true, yet theologically false.*] "The subtle doctors of the schools," says Mosheim, "not only explained the mysteries of religion in a manner conformable to the principles of their presumptuous logic, and modified them

according to the dictates of their imperfect reason; but also propagated the most impious sentiments and tenets concerning the Supreme Being, the material world, the origin of the universe, and the nature of the soul. And when it was objected to these sentiments and tenets, that they were in direct contradiction to the genius of Christianity and to the express doctrines of Scripture, these scholastic quibblers had recourse, for a reply, or rather for a method of escape, to that perfidious distinction which has frequently been employed by modern deists, that these tenets were *philosophically true* and conformable to right reason, but that they were indeed *theologically false*, and contrary to the orthodox faith." Cent. xiii. part. ii. ch. 3. §. 9.

P. 211. l. 9. *it engendered that monster Scepticism.*] "Imò, unde scholastici suas quodlibeticas et frivolas quæstiones, nisi ex hâc *scepticismi* lacunâ, hauserunt? Hoc bene notavit Jansenius, *August. tom.* ii. *procem. lib. cap.* 28. Scholastici, inquit, nimio philosophiæ amore quasi ebrii, arcana illa mysteria gratiæ sepulta, deletaque, secundùm humanæ rationis regulas eruere, penetrare, formare, judicare, voluerunt. Hinc ille ardor de quolibet disputandi, quidlibet eorum in dubium revocandi. Hinc eorum theologia innumerabilium opinionum farragine referta est, per quas ferè omnia, quantumcunque contraria, facta sunt probabilia; quæ, secundùm eorum pronuntiata, cuilibet tueri licet. Ita vix quicquam certi, præter fidem, formandarum opinionum novarum promptitudo reliquum fecit. Præcipitii enim pœna, *suspendium* (ἐποχὴ) hoc est, temeritatis omnis hæsitantia et incertitudo. Nihil enim naturalius et vicinius, quàm ut homines ex *Peripateticis* fiant *Academici:* quorum illi, sublucente ratiunculâ, sententiam extemplò præcipitant; hi, temeritatis ducti pœnitentiâ, semper hæsitant: et nunc hoc, nunc illud, animo fluctuante, displicet, placet: unde fit ut quod eis hodie probabile est, cras falsum judicetur." Galei Philos. General. par. ii. l. i. c. 4. ad finem. Dr. Ogilvie also, in his *Treatise on Scepticism and Infidelity*, has ably drawn out the connection between the scholastic theology of the middle ages and the scepticism which almost immediately succeeded it.

P. 212. l. 9. *The Jews also*, &c.] "Is autem Rabanus, in libro contra Judæos, de illis sic scribit: *Denique audiat paulisper religiosa sanctitas vestra, quàm nefandis atque inauditis blasphemiis et convitiis Dominum nostrum Jesu Christum et Christianum ejus populum irrideant et subsannent. Sanctos Apostolos, impiè immutato vocabulo, appellant Apostatas; tanquam non missos à Deo, sed refugas legis suæ. Evange-*

lium, quod nos Græco eloquio intelligimus bonum nuncium, ipsi propriâ linguâ malitiosissimè immutantes, vocant Havongalion, quod interpretatur Latinè iniquitatis revelatio: asserentes, videlicet quòd non in eo mysterium salutis humanæ, sed iniquitas, quâ totus mundus in errorem mitteretur, fuerit revelata.—Ait igitur porrò: *Blasphemant quòd in eum credamus quem lex Dei in ligno suspensum et à Deo maledictum dicat: et propterea eodem die quo suspensus est eum jusserit sepeliri, ne si per noctem remaneret in patibulo, terra eorum per eum pollueretur.—Cultum quem ei in toto mundo fideles exhibent vocant cultum Baal et religionem Dei alieni..... Populos nationum qui ejus susceperunt fidem interpretantes esse Babyloniam, et regem hujus Babylonis Christum nostrum intelligentes, quicquid in illâ visione Isaiæ cujus titulus est Onus Babylonis, dicitur de relaxatione populi Dei ex Babylonicâ captivitate, et de interitu regis et regni illius, totum ad suam de hâc novissimâ captivitate ereptionem, et ad Christi, ut ipsi putant, dejectionem, impiissimè transferre conantur..... Sed isti, nec tantis ac talibus blasphemiis contenti, in tam profundam infelicitatis voraginem devoluti sunt, ut persuasum sit eis, et studiosè apud eos observetur, quòd nulla eorum oratio apud Deum possit esse accepta, nisi in eâ Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum maledicant: confitentes eum esse impium et filium impii, id est, nescio cujus Ethnici, quem nominant Panderam, à quo dicunt matrem Domini adulteratam, et inde quem nos credimus natum.*" Wagenselii *Tela ignea Satanæ*, 4to. 1681. tom. i. præf. p. 51. See also Pfeifferi Dissertat. de Jud. et Muham. 4to. 1665. disc. 2. entitled, *Obtrectator Apella, seu Calumniarum Judaicarum in Christum Salvatorem et Christianos, ex scriptis præcipuè Talmudicis petita, recensio.*

P. 212. l. 20. *Their frequently confederating with the Saracens, in opposition to Christianity*, &c.] Bp. Kidder reckons *Mahomet* among the false Christs, and refers for his authorities to Joannes a Lent, who, in his *Schediasma de Judæorum Pseudo-Messiis*, has collected several testimonies to prove that Mahomet was owned by the deluded Jews as the Messias. To which Bp. Kidder adds, that the Jews have too often, both of later times, and from the beginning, renounced their own religion, and embraced that of Mahomet. See his *Demonstration of the Messias*, part iii. p. 169. See also Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 378, where, speaking of Sabatai Sevi, the celebrated false Messiah of Smyrna, he mentions, (on the authority of De La Croix in his *Relation of the Ottoman Empire*,) that Sabatai, when he had apostatized, preached at Constanti-

nople, and drew over many Jews to profess Mohammedism. Sabatai died A. D. 1679.

P. 212. l. 25. *Their eagerness in following every pretended Messiah*, &c.] See Bp. Kidder, as above, part iii. p. 166—178. and Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 356—378, whose account is chiefly abridged from Bp. Kidder, as Bp. Kidder's is from the work above mentioned of Joannes a Lent de Pseudo-Messiis.

Ibid. l. 27. *no fewer than ten are mentioned to have arisen in the course of the twelfth century.*] See Basnage, b. vii. ch. ix.

P. 213. l. 16. *the Cabalistical theology.*] For a full account of the Jewish Cabala, see Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, b. iii. ch. 10—28. also Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. per. ii. part i. lib. ii. cap. 2, 3, *de Philosophiâ Judaicâ*. Carpzovii Introd. in Theol. Judaic. (prefixed to the *Pugio Fidei* Raymundi Martini) cap. x. §. 10. Buddei Elem. Philos. tom. i. cap. 2. §. 11—14. Wulferi *Theriaca Judaica*, p. 57—72. Maii *Synopsis Theol. Jud.* prolegom. §. 6—8.

P. 214. l. 15. *this system must not be confounded with the genuine Cabala, or Tradition, held by the ancient Jews.*] "Cabalisticæ philosophiæ consideratio obscura et difficillima est, tum ob arcanam tradendi methodum et allegoriæ velum, tum ob argumenti metaphysici et à communibus notionibus valdè recedentis sublimitatem. Nomen Cabalæ, quod traditionem oralem significat, et Judæis quoque doctrinam propheticam, itemque traditionem patrum, sensu autem eminentiori philosophiam mysticam designat, inter Christianos ante Joannis Pici ætatem auditum non est, nec adeò vetustum est apud Judæos: ipsa Cabalistica philosophia paucissimis innotuit, à paucioribus rectè intellecta, et cum Cabalâ exegeticâ et practicâ haud rarò confusa est."——"Veram itaque patriam Cabalæ philosophicæ quærendam esse in Ægypto. In hâc enim regione Judæos tempore Alexandri M. et Ptolemæorum considentes, ope allegoriæ philosophiam Ægyptiacam, ex Pythagorico-Platonicâ, Orientali, et domesticâ, mero syncretismo conflatam, ad patriæ sapientiæ præcepta transtulisse, et hoc pacto systema illud emanativum, rationibus Orientalibus, Zoroastreis, Ægyptiacis, Pythagoricis Platonicis, temperatum et in unam massam confusum, recepisse, atque divinioris sapientiæ nominibus et titulis, ac capitibus nonnullis adaptavisse...succedente verò tempore, ab ingenio, sectâ, opinionibus eorum, qui Cabalam promoverunt haud pauca accesserunt, etiam Peripatetica nonnulla, quædam etiam

quæ haud obscurè juniorem ætatem produnt. Recentiores verò Cabalisticæ philosophiæ interpretes, prout quis hypothesi sectæve cuidam addictus fuit aut syncretismo favit, multa heterogenea, spuria, peregrina admiscuisse, et haud rarò difficillimas allegorias suo ex ingenio explicuisse, observandum est." Brucker, ut suprà, per. ii. part. i. l. ii. c. iii. sect. 2.

P. 216. l. 3. *it is much more nearly allied to absolute Infidelity, to Deism, and even Atheism, than to true Religion*] " Quicquid systema Cabalisticum tradit, eò tendit, ut ostendat quo pacto res omnes, ipso materiali mundo non excepto, ex Deo variis gradibus et ordinibus emanaverint, et in eum iterum reversuræ sint. Quod principium systematis emanativi primarium totam Cabalam ad fanatica philosophiæ genera detrudit, ex imaginationis abusu et stultâ applicatione ad argumentum metaphysicum enata, et enthusiasmum finem habentia....Ceterùm quamvis Cabalistæ, frena nimiùm imaginationi laxantes, valdè in Dei naturam peccaverint, et *pantheismum* induxerint, ab *Atheismi* tamen maculâ absolvendi sunt, eò quòd inter *fontem emanantem* et *emanativa* essentiale discrimen ponunt, omnemque de Deo *multitudinem* solicitè removent. Sufficit, cùm omnia quæ sunt et existunt ex Dei essentiâ effluxerint, *unumque* Deum, at *ecolutum*, constituant, et in eum denique reducantur, Deitatis omnia plena esse, cunctaque Divinæ naturæ particulas fieri, sicque detestabilem *Deismum* introduci." Brucker, ut supra. Perhaps, however, the reader will hardly think this subtle distinction sufficient to acquit the Cabalistic writers of the charge of holding *Atheistic* principles.

P. 217. l. 11. *the farther the Jews advanced in their hostility to the Christian religion, the greater were the absurdities admitted into their theological creed.*] For an account of the progressive deterioration of the Jewish theology, see Basnage's History of the Jews, as above, b. iv. ch. 20. 24. 26—28, in which are considered the *first* notion which the Jews had of the Messiah, taken from the prophets; the *second*, that of the Jews in the time of Jesus Christ; the *third*, that of the Talmudists, Rabbies, &c. concerning the Messiah they expect; the *fourth* and *fifth*, those of the blasphemous Jewish writers against our B. Saviour, in still later times. See also the five first chapters of Carpzovius's *Introduction to Jewish Theology*, prefixed to the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymund Martin: and Reiman. *Hist. Atheismi et Atheorum*, cap. ii. *de Atheismo Judæorum*.

Ibid. p. 26. *Maimonides, and other learned Jews, laboured to construct a more plausible system.*] See Basnage,

b. vii. ch. 8. and Carpzovius, ut suprà, cap. 6. Maimonides, however, who studied philosophy under Averroes, was himself suspected of a tendency to atheism. "Elegantissimè omnium non in patriâ tantùm eruditione, sed in philosophiâ quoque Græcanicâ versatus est R. Moses Maimonides, Hispanus, quem legisse scripta Platonis, Aristotelis, Themistii, Galeni, aliorumque, ex ejus libris constat, quemque mysteria philosophiæ Græcæ accuratè pernovisse, ex logicâ ejus aliisque commentationibus, maximè *doctore perplexorum*, dispalescit. Quæ tamen eruditio philosophica heterodoxiæ suspicionem apud recutitos Maimonidi contraxit, cùm haud rarò Aristotelem et Averroem, quàm Mosen, sequi maluerit." Brucker, per. ii. part i. l. ii. c. ii. §. 9. See also Reiman, ut suprà, cap. ii. §. 14.

P. 220. l. 7. *But as we arrive at a still later period of Jewish history, we meet with attempts even of a more flagitious nature.*] Wagenseil, in his learned and elaborate work, entitled, *Tela Ignea Satanæ*, supposes the Jewish book called *Nizzachon Vetus* to have been written in the 12th century;—the *Disputatio Jechielis cum Nicolao*, *Disputatio Nachmanidis cum Fratre Paulo*, and *Liber Toldos Jeschu*, in the 13th century;—the *Carmen Memoriale Lipmanni*, in the 14th or 15th;—the *Munimen Fidei Isaaci*, in the 16th century. Nothing can exceed the virulence of these writings, especially that of the Toldos Jeschu, an abstract of which is given in Basnage's History, b. iv. c. xxviii.

Ibid. l. 24. *their infamous authors studiously concealed them from all but persons of their own persuasion.*] Many remarkable instances of the *secrecy* with which the Jews circulated their libellous attacks upon Christianity, are related in Wagenseil's general preface to his Tela Ignea Satanæ, and in his short prefaces to the several Jewish tracts which he has collected together in that curious work.

P. 221. l. 15. *at the time when Christianity was most obscured by barbarism and ignorance, Mahometanism was in possession of acute and even learned supporters.*] Of the indefatigable diligence, at least, of Mahometan writers in defence of their cause, we may form some conception from the number of their books which Cardinal Ximenes is said to have collected together and destroyed in Spain. Wagenseil (in his Tela Ignea Satanæ, præf. p. 13.) thus relates the circumstance: "Juvat referre hue, quod Franciscus Ximenius, Archiepiscopus Toletanus, circa Saracenorum libros statuit, ex lib. 2do Alvari Gomesii de illius Cardinalis rebus gestis. Is enim, *cùm Mahometanæ per-*

fidiæ extirpandæ in regno Granatensi aliisque Hispaniæ locis intentus esset, in id quoque diligenter incubuit, ut libri quibus superstitio illa tradebatur abolerentur. Alfaquinis ergo (sic Mauri sacrorum Antistites nominant) ad omnia obsequia eo tempore exhibenda promptis, Alchoranos, id est, suæ superstitionis gravissimos libros, et omnes, cujuscunque authoris et generis essent, Mahumetanæ impietatis codices, facilè, sine edicto, aut vi, ut in publicum adducerentur, impetravit. Quinque millia voluminum sunt fermè congesta, quæ variis umbilicis, Punicâ arte et operâ distincta, auro etiam et argento exornata, non oculos modò, sed animos quoque spectantium rapiebant. Multi eis se donari à Ximenio petierunt, sed nemini quicquam concessum est: iquibus omnia, publicâ in pyrâ, ad unum exusta; præterquam aliquot ad rem medicam pertinentia, (cujus gens illa, non sine magno profectu, studiosissima semper fuit,) quæ, propter saluberrimæ artis dignitatem, ex incendio illo liberata, in Bibliothecâ Complutensi nunc servantur."—See also a list of writers in defence of Mahometanism, affixed to Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.

P. 222. l. 20. *The Mahometans, as well as the Jews, began, at an early period, to intermix the studies of philosophy with theology.*] "Magno studio caverat Mohammedes, ne inter sectatores de placitis suis discordia exsurgeret; quæ tamen evitari non potuit, ubi philosophiæ cultus inter Saracenos obtinuit, et ad emendandum legis Islamiticæ popularibus crassisque notionibus rationem valdè offendentis, ineptias adhibitus est; et hinc multæ sectæ exortæ sunt, quarum numerum septuaginta quidam constituunt. Illæ ad theologiæ quidem Muhammedicæ historiam pertinent, adeóque hoc loco enarrari non possunt: non omittendæ tamen sunt ideò, quia ex philosophiæ applicatione ad legis explicationem ortum acceperunt, cùm ineptiis Muhammedicis color et emendatio à philosophiâ, quæ invaluerat, Aristotelicâ, peteretur, et theologi Muhammedani libros philosophorum Græcorum, Syriacâ et Arabicâ linguâ expressos, legere cœpissent, telis autem philosophicis contrà copias Christianorum superstitionem Muhammedis oppugnantium uti vellent. Tunc enim, conditâ theologiâ Scholasticâ, quam Al Calam nuncupaverunt, rationalistarum, sive disserentium, secta exorta est; cœperuntque innumeræ dissertationes philosophicæ de argumentis theologicis audiri, nempe ut meliori habitu religio, ad illiteratæ plebis sensum priùs efficta, compareret; et excogitatæ sunt novæ indies hypotheses, ut nutanti superstitioni fulcra subjicerentur. Cui theologiæ philosophicæ quamvis haud pauci se opponerent, nonnulli ad hæreses tantùm refrenandas adhibendam esse contenderent,

mansit tamen ejus honos; necessitate theologos Muhammedanos compellente, ut ad hanc sacram anchoram confugerent. Mirum itaque haud est philosophiæ quoque studium valdè sibi commendatum Arabes habuisse, nec esse scientiam philosophicam quam non multi scriptores hujus gentis excoluerint, quorum nomina apud Hottingerum legi possunt." Bruckeri Inst. Hist. Philos. per. ii. part. i. l. iii. c. i. §. 7. See also Reimanni Hist. Atheismi et Atheorum, sect. iv. *de Atheismo Muhammedanorum.* Buddei Elem. Philos. tom. i. c. iii. §. 18. and c. v. §. 3, 4, 5.

P. 223. l. 13. *the notorious, if not avowed, infidelity of several persons in high and commanding stations,* &c.] Concerning the infidelity which prevailed in Christian countries, during the middle ages, see (besides Mosheim and other ecclesiastical writers) Reimanni Hist. Atheismi et Atheorum, sect. iii. p. 313—527. Buddei de Atheismo et Superstitione, cap. i. §. 23, 24. p. 103—146. Philippi Hist. Atheismi, cap. vii. p. 58—88. Reiman divides the history of Atheism, among Christians, into three periods: "Hæc *tres* hujus paroxysmi facit periodos, quarum *primam* posses appellare Magnam, *secundam* Majorem, *tertiam* Maximam. Et *prima* quidem à Seculo iv. (quo Atheismi semina primâ vice in Occidente emicuerunt) faciens initium, et usque ad Sec. xi. progressa. Exhibet Sec. iv. Priscillianum; Sec. v. Vincentium Victorem; Sec. vi. viii. ix. x. quosdam de clericorum Romanorum ordine cotidie in deterius ruente—*Secunda,* à Sec. xi. usque ad Sec. xvi. deducta, comprehendit è Sec. xi. Aurelianenses quosdam Atheos combustos; è Sec. xii. Scholasticos generatim, ut atheismi architectos, speciatim Scotistas ac Thomistas, Nominales et Reales; è Sec. xiii. Almaricanos, cum Davide Dinantio, Davide Thurnajo, Francisco Accursio, Frederico II. Alphonso X.; è Sec. xiv. Joh. Boccatium; è Sec. xv. Hermannum Ryswick, Franciscum Poggium Florentinum, Hermolaum Barbarum, Laurentium Vallam. Quorum tamen omnium non idem reatus est, nec culpa cunctorum extra controversiæ aleam est posita.—*Tertia,* à Sec. xvi. usque ad nostra tempora procedens, omnium est spississima. Hâc enim,

> *Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres*
> *Quem super notas aluere ripas,*

ruit mali hujus sentina, et inquinavit Ecclesiam." Vide, ut suprà, p. 315.

P. 225. l. 13. *Wickliffe.*] It is well known that the Romish writers charge Wickliffe with holding many heretical and schismatical opinions. Some of these, how-

ever, are such as no *Protestant* will allow to be, in any respect, heterodox. For example, Varillas imputes it as *schism* in Wickliffe, that he asserted the temporal rights of princes against the papal usurpation; that he denied the right of his holiness to levy tribute on England; that he denied the power of king John to render his crown tributary to the pope; and that he held that the Church of Rome had no privileges above other Churches, but had unlawfully usurped those which it then possessed. See his *Hist. des Révolutions en Matière de Religion*, 4to. 1686. l. i. p. 15, 16, 30. Yet in the same work (p. 29, 30.) it is allowed, that Wickliffe explained some of the chief heresies imputed to him, relative to church-property, papal excommunication, and the nullity of the sacraments when administered by wicked priests, in a sense which rendered them harmless and inoffensive. Varillas labours also to shew, with hardly a semblance of proof, (p. 18, 20.) that the Duke of Lancaster had an interest in favouring Wickliffe's opinions, intending thereby to forward his own ambitious views. He would also fain attribute Wat Tyler's rebellion, John Ball's seditious harangues, and the other outrages of those times, to Wickliffe, though he acknowledges that he did not *appear* among the rebels; for which he is pleased to assign the following reason: "Viclef ne s'étoit trouvé ni dans les assemblées des séditieux, ni à l'assassinat de l'archevêque de Canterbery; et soit *qu'il ne fut pas alors tourmenté de la passion de lui succéder*, soit *qu'il y eût renoncé volontairement au profit de Bale*, ou *que la timidité, qui lui étoit naturelle, fut devenue plûs forte dans son cœur que l'ambition*, il laissa aux autres courir tout le danger de l'entreprise, et attendit, en lieu sur, quel en seroit le succès." Ibid. p. 45. Elsewhere also, he inveighs against Wickliffe, as a *coward*, no less than an *apostate;* and he insinuates, that Luther too was *fearful* of suffering for his opinions. But whiles Wickliffe and Luther are thus treated as men of a dastardly spirit, merely because they escaped martyrdom; Huss and Jerome, for submitting to that "fiery trial" with constancy and firmness, are stigmatized as *rash, presumptuous, impudent, absurd, hardened*, and *impenitent* sinners. Ibid. p. 97, 128. Such is the *candour*, and the *consistency*, of Romish writers! It cannot, however, be denied, that *some* of Wickliffe's opinions were, in the unqualified sense in which he usually delivered them, justly chargeable with error, and with danger both to Church and State, having a tendency to set up a private spirit against lawful authority, to diminish the just rights of the Christian priesthood,

and to detract from the true apostolical dignity of the episcopal office. The reader will be able to judge of these, by consulting any of the following works: viz. Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. i. p. 483—530. 9th edit. fol. 1684. Wilkin's Concil. Brit. tom. iii. p. 339—349. Collier's Eccl. Hist. of Gr. Britain, vol. i. p. 564—586, and vol. ii. p. 48—50. Lewis's Life of Wickliffe, 8vo. 1720. ch. 8, 9.

SERMON VIII.

P. 231. l. 1. *Of those who were willing to resist it's encroachments, not a few were hostile to Christianity itself.*] Although whatever is urged by *Popish* writers on this head is deserving of but little attention, (since they, for the most part, indiscriminately treat the leaders of the Protestant Reformation as Infidels, and men of Atheistical principles,) yet, if we may judge from the advantage which the enemies to revealed religion soon took of the unhappy divisions among Protestants, to bring Christianity itself into discredit, we cannot but suppose that many who at first joined in vehement outcries against Popery, had in truth little real concern for the interests of religion, but sought only to release themselves from the shackles of Romish tyranny, that they might be at liberty to pursue their own Anti-Christian schemes with greater probability of success. Generally speaking, however, the most daring and determined enemies to Christianity were to be found among the professed adherents to the Romish Church. See Bruckeri Hist. Philos. per. iii. part. i. l. 2. c. 3. §. 38—42. Reimanni Hist. Atheor. cap. 8, 9, 10. Hoornbeckii *Summa Controversiarum*, lib. vi. *de Enthusiastis et Libertinis*, p. 401—440. Buddei *de Atheismo et Superst.* c. 1. §. 28.

Ibid. l. 27. *Infidel writers seem to take peculiar pleasure in reviling their characters and depreciating the value of their exertions.*] This will be found to be almost invariably the case with Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon; who hardly ever fail, when a comparison can be instituted between the conduct of the Papists and the Protestants, to make a disadvantageous representation of the latter. In like manner, and for similar reasons, Heretics and Schismatics generally find apologists in writers of this description.

P. 236. l. 14. *though we are accustomed to speak of the Reformation as the work of the 15th and 16th centuries, yet it's rise may be traced many ages before.*] See Perrin's

" Luther's Forerunners," or Hist. of the Waldenses and Albigenses; and Allix's Hist. of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont, and of the Albigenses, 4to. 1690 and 1692. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. xi. part ii. ch. 5. §. 2. and cent. xii. part ii. ch. 5. §. 11, 12, 13. Kortholt. sæc. xii. p. 485—488. Jortin's Eccl. Hist. vol. v. p. 218, &c.

P. 236. l. 18. *The Waldenses and the Albigenses distinguished themselves upwards of 300 years before the preaching of Luther.*] Dr. Allix, in his elaborate and very interesting History above mentioned, has clearly shewn, that from the earliest time of Christianity there were Churches in Italy and Gaul, of Apostolical origin and foundation, wholly independent of the Church of Rome, and distinguished by a steady adherence to the primitive faith and discipline. The testimonies which he has collected from Ecclesiastical Writers and from public documents, through every century from the Apostolical age to the cruel persecution of those eminent witnesses of truth in the 12th and following centuries, put this matter beyond all doubt.

P. 238. l. 8. *They are to be vindicated, not merely upon the general duty of separation from a Church which imposes sinful terms of communion, much less upon the loose principles of modern Schismatics,* &c.] See Allix's Hist. of the Ch. of Piedmont, as above, ch. 19 and 20; in which he clearly proves that the Churches of Italy were not founded by Peter Waldo, as Bossuet and other Romish writers maintain, neither was it from a spirit of schism that they separated from the Church of Rome. Sectaries, however, and fanatics of various kinds, in later times, have been no less solicitous to shelter themselves under the authority of these primitive advocates for the truth, than Popish writers have been to confound them with the worst of heretics and schismatics.

Ibid. l. 14. *but upon the solid grounds of Church authority.*] Dr. Allix relates, that upon the arrival of legates at Milan, from Pope Nicholas II. who endeavoured to bring the Church of Italy under the Papal jurisdiction, the discontent of the clergy was expressed in the following remarkable terms: " Non debere Ambrosianam Ecclesiam Romanis legibus subjacere, nullumque judicandi vel disponendi jus Romano pontifici in illâ sede competere. Nimis indignum, ut quæ sub progenitoribus nostris SEMPER extitit libera, ad nostræ confusionis opprobrium, nunc alteri, quod absit, Ecclesiæ sit subjecta." Vide, ut suprà, ch. xiv. p. 119.

P. 239. l. 4. *The Romish writers, indeed, charge them, not only with heresy and schism, but with other errors of*

the most abominable kind.] See Perrin, Hist. des Vaudois, l. i. ch. 3, 4, 5. and Allix, ut suprà, ch. 15, 26. and Hist. of the Albigenses, ch. 15—20.

P. 240. l. 1. *With even more than Pagan fury were these reputed Heretics persecuted and destroyed.*] See Perrin, ut suprà, l. ii. ch. 6—18. Allix's Hist. of Ch. of Piedmont, ch. 25. And Hist. of the Albigenses, ch. 21. Also Kortholti Hist. Eccl. sæc. xiii. p. 500.

P. 242. l. 1. *the English Reformers, in particular, acted not against any lawful authority, but in complete subordination to it.*] To this the Reformers in other countries, (even Calvin, Beza, and others of the Geneva school,) bore ample testimony; since they often spake in terms of admiration, not unmixed with envy, of the peculiar felicity of the Reformers here, who were enabled to accomplish their great work, without infringing upon any essential points of order and discipline. Proofs of this continually occur in the controversial writings of that period. But for a more particular defence of our own Reformers, against the cavils of Romish writers, see Abp. Laud's *Conference with Fisher*; Leslie's *Case stated between the Ch. of England and the Ch. of Rome*; and Dr. Hickes's *Letters to a Popish Priest*. In these will be found a full refutation of the charges brought against our Reformers, and a complete vindication of them, upon the soundest principles of Church-unity and Church-authority.

Ibid. l. 13. *even the most bigoted writers in behalf of Popery acknowledge the Protestant Reformation to have been brought on by the scandalous abuses of power in the Romish Church.*] See a large extract from Fleury's Eccl. Hist. in Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 72—181, wherein the Cardinal freely animadverts upon the crimes and enormities of the Church of Rome, and deplores their mischievous effects. Dr. Allix, in his Hist. of the Churches of Piedmont (p. 207) remarks, that there have not been wanting a great number, in the bosom of the Church of Rome, since the time of Gregory the Seventh, who conceived and publicly proposed the notion that the Pope was Antichrist, and the Church of Rome the Great Whore, and mystical Babylon. He also adds, that *Baleus* takes notice of a great number of these writers in England; and that *Wolfius* hath instanced in many others belonging to the other parts of the Western Empire. Dr. Woodroffe, in his *Examen Examinis, sive Reformationis Defensio adversùs Calumnias F. F. Otrokocsi*, p. 67, says, "instar omnium erit, quam in *Adriani* instructione, corruptelarum et necessariæ Reformationis confessionem habemus. Ita

enim, p. 129, loquitur pontifex: Scimus in hâc Sanctâ Sede aliquot jam annis multa abominanda fuisse; abusus in spiritualibus, excessus in mandatis, et omnia denique in perversum mutata. Nec mirum si ægritudo à capite in membra, à summis pontificibus in alios inferiores prælatos descenderit. Omnes nos (id est prælati ecclesiastici) declinavimus quisque in vias suas, nec fuit jamdiu qui faceret bonum, non fuit usque ad unum: quamobrem necesse est, ut omnes demus gloriam Deo, et humiliemus animas nostras ei. Videat unusquisque nostrûm, unde ecciderit; et se potiùs quilibet judicet, quàm à Deo in virgâ furoris sui judicari velit. Quâ in re, quod ad nos attinet, polliceberis nos omnem operam adhibituros, ut primùm curia hæc, unde fortè omne hoc malum processit, reformetur: ut sicut inde corruptio in omnes inferiores emanavit, ita etiam ab eâdem sanitas, et reformatio omnium emanet. Ad quod procurandum nos tanto arctiùs obligatos reputamus, quanto universum mundum hujusmodi reformationem avidiùs desiderare videmus." See also Kortholti Eccl. Hist. sæc. xv. cap. 2. Bp. Hall's *Old Religion*, ch. 3. and the letters on Hume's Hist. above referred to, containing several strong proofs to the same effect, p. 80. 97.

P. 249. l. 26. *The Jews still continued their indefatigable efforts.*] "The Jews," says Bp. Kidder, "are of all men in the world the most considerable enemies of Christianity. They are so at this day, and, I believe, were always so. They are a people subtle and sharp, of great natural wit, and some learning. The Deists among us, who would run down our revealed religion, and those among us who oppose any of its fundamental articles, are but underworkmen to the Jews: their tools and instruments with which they labour, are to be found in the shops of the Jews; who are generally more dextrous in using them, than those men are among ourselves, who trade under them." Demonstration of the Messias, part iii. p. 199, 200. See also Wagenseil's Tela Ignea Satanæ, tom. i. præf. p. 84. et seq., and Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, book vii. ch. 29, 30.

Ibid. l. 13. *The unhappy contests between the reformed and the corrupted churches, were applied by the Jews to the purpose of throwing discredit altogether upon the Gospel.*] It was an old objection, on the part of the Jews, that Christianity could not be true, because of the dissensions among its professors, respecting doctrines of the greatest moment. See Limborch, *Collatio cum erudito Judæo*, p. 200. Concerning the efforts of the Jews, at the time of the

Reformation, see also Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, book vii. ch. 30.

P. 250. l. 15. *Even Luther himself.*] Luther wrote a tract, entitled, *De Judæis et eorum Mendaciis*, 1543; another, *De Jesu Christo verè Judæo*, 1523: and another, *Contra Sabbatarios* 1538. See the Appendix to Cave's Hist. Literaria, p. 252; and Fabricius de Ver. Chr. Rel. p. 578. Basnage speaks of the Jews being exceedingly galled by Luther's writings against them. See his Hist. of the Jews, b. vii. ch.30 .§. 18.

Ibid. l. 21. *Of Mahometanism*, &c.] See Reiman. Hist. Ath. sect. iv. *de Atheismo Muhammedanorum.* Guadagnoli's Apology, and several other writers against Mahometanism, referred to in the notes to Lect. vi. were published about this period.

P. 251. l. 20. *The revival of Grecian literature—the invention of the art of printing.*] See Appendix to Cave's Hist. Lit. sæc. xv. p. 101. To these causes of the Reformation should also be added, the study of the original languages of holy writ, which at this time began to be much cultivated. Wagenseil, adverting to the progress in Hebrew literature which then began to be made throughout Germany, says, "Hoc Deus voluit, nec aliter poterat Ecclesia à labe, quæ ex temporis et humani ingenii vitio ei adhæserat, per quandam quasi lustrationem expurgari. Nam ut pura et sincera rursus fieret, necesse erat ut Scripturæ sacra oracula in authentico sermone, quo fuerant edita, intelligerentur, et ut gradu dejectâ, quæ diu dominatum immeritò exercuerat, Latinâ versione, Hebraica veritas restitueretur in locum. Proinde, æquè ad reformandam ac formandam Ecclesiam, Deus doctores et apostolos dono linguarum secundùm mensuram et modum, quem ipse cuique negotio proficuum ac necessarium sciebat, instruxit." Præf. ad Tela Ignea Satanæ, p. 88.

P. 253. l. 5. *Hence we find, about the period of the Reformation, a revival of almost every philosophical sect*, &c.] See Bruckeri Hist. Philos. per. iii. part. i. lib. ii. and part. ii. lib. i.

P. 254. l. 5. *The names of several distinguished scholars in the very heart of the papal dominions*, &c.] Among these are recorded Popes Leo X. John XXIII. and Clement VII. Cardinal Bembo, Ficinus, Politian, Pomponatius, Portius, Aretin, Poggio, Bruno, and many others, who make a conspicuous figure in the annals of atheism. See the authors already referred to in the note on p. 267. l. iii., and also Bruckeri Hist. Philos. per. iii. part. i. l. ii. c. 3. It is much to be regretted, that Mr. Roscoe, in

his life of Lorenzo de Medici, and his Hist. of the Pontificate of Leo X., seems to have studiously glossed over the impiety and licentiousness of the most distinguished characters of those periods, and rather endeavoured to render them attractive, than to excite that abhorrence and disgust which a faithful delineation of their principles and practice would hardly fail to produce.

P. 255. l. 10. *The Protestants, generally speaking, resisted the pope, not in his episcopal character, &c. but as an unlawful usurper.*] The grounds on which the Protestant Churches in general, and that of the Church of England in particular, separated from the Church of Rome, will be found very clearly laid down in Abp. Laud's *Conference with Fisher*; Bp. Overall's *Convocation Book*; Leslie's *Case stated between the Churches of England and Rome*; and Dr. Hickes's *Letters with a Popish Priest and a Lady who had been converted to Popery*, in two parts, 8vo. 1705, 1710. Dr. Hickes, in the following passage, has forcibly expressed what seems to have been the general sentiment of the first Protestant Reformers. "I call God to witness," says he, "I would turn Roman Catholic (for so you call yourselves) with all my heart, if I could; and if I may be judge of myself, I think I could cheerfully lay down my life, upon condition that the church of Rome were such a church as all other churches could safely hold communion with. But alas! that is not to be done, upon the principles and terms of truly catholic communion: it is not to be done, without forsaking the ancient catholic Church, and her truly catholic faith, worship, and government; in which all the more primitive churches, and that of Rome among the rest, for many ages agreed. It is not to be done, without the violation of them all, and, by consequence, without running a very dangerous risk of eternal damnation, and partaking of her plagues, as well as her sins." See his Letters, as above, part ii. p. 116. Bp. Carleton relates that our learned and pious reformer, Bernard Gilpin, thus argued with himself, "If the pope be Antichrist, I see not only probable, but even necessary causes to depart from the Popish church. But if the pope be not Antichrist, I see no sufficient ground for such a departure. It is not lawful to make a separation from the Church. But we are not only enjoined to come out of the church of Antichrist, but we see the fearful anger of the living God, and hear his dreadful threats thundered out against those who shall remain in Babylon, that synagogue of Antichrist: forasmuch as a voice from Heaven speaketh unto us, Apoc. xviii. *Come out of her, my people:* and

it is denounced that they shall receive of her plagues, whosoever have been partakers of her sins." And again; "he would say, that here was no third thing to be thought upon: that either the Church of Christ was not to be forsaken, or the pope to be accounted Antichrist, out of whose church the Church of God is called forth by an heavenly command." Bp. Carleton's Life of Gilpin. p. 10, 11. See also Bp. Hurd's Warburton Lectures, serm. 7, 8. Bp. Halifax's Warb. Lect. serm. 12. Gray's Bamp. Lect. serm. 4, 5. Croft's Bampt. Lect. serm. 4. Leslie *on the Qualifications requisite to administer the Sacraments*, sect. 3. Bp. Hall's *Old Religion*, ch. 3. entitled, *The Reformed unjustly charged with Novelty, Heresie, Schism*; and ch. 4. entitled, *The Church of Rome guilty of this Schism.*

P. 256. l. 23. *Many of the warmest advocates for the Reformation are well known to have manifested an unshaken attachment to episcopacy.*] A copious and valuable collection of testimonies to this effect, drawn from the writings of foreign Reformers, even those who had embraced the Geneva discipline, may be found in Bp. Moreton's Hist. of Episcopacy. See also Leslie's Supplement to the Tract on the Qualifications requisite to administer the Sacraments, towards the conclusion, vol. ii. of his Works, p. 755.

P. 257. l. 16. *were carried into the opposite extreme of regarding* themselves *as infallible.*] See Leslie's Snake in the Grass, sect. vi. *concerning the Quaker's infallibility*, and his *Answer to the Switch for the Snake*, sect. v. Quakers and Papists seem also to depreciate alike the authority of the H. Scriptures; the one by rendering it subordinate to the *Pope's* infallibility, the other to *their own*, or, in other words, *to the inward light*. Leslie has shewn that these and other similar errors were common to several enthusiastic sects, of earlier date than the Quakers. See his answer to the Switch, sect. 22, on *the Original of Quakerism*[m].

258. l. 4. *Sects of various denominations arose, distracting the Church with endless confusion.*) Concerning those which succeeded the downfall of episcopacy in this country, under the usurpation of Cromwell, see Edwards's *Gangræna*, 4to. 1646, and Nalson's *Foxes and Firebrands*, 12mo. 1682, at the conclusion of which is given a summary view of the doctrines of these sects, and of the

[m] He elsewhere remarks, that "the Quaker infallibility was contrived on purpose to bring men back to the infallibility of the church of Rome." *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 15, shewing, that *the popish emissaries first set up Quakerism in England.*

point in which some of them harmonize with popery. This work contains a curious account of the subtle artifices of Popish emissaries to promote these extravagancies, and to excite dissensions among the reformed churches, in order to bring Protestantism into disrepute.

P. 258. l. 17. *who did incalculable mischief to the cause of religion, by undervaluing its external ordinances.*] The rejection of the sacraments and the priesthood tends to weaken greatly, if not to overthrow, the evidences of Christianity, as well as to encourage heresy and schism. "The sacraments of the Church," says Dr. Waterland, "have all long been, and are to this day, standing monuments of the *truth* of Christianity, against Atheists, Deists, Jews, Turks, Pagans, and all kinds of Infidels. They bear date as early as the Gospel itself; and have continued, without interruption, from the days of their Founder. They proclaim to the world, that there once was such a person as CHRIST JESUS; that he lived, and died, and was buried, and rose again; and that he erected a Church, and drew the world after him, maugre all opposition: (which could never have been affected without many and great *miracles:*) and that he appointed these ordinances for the preserving and perpetuating the same Church, till his coming again. The two *sacraments* in this view, are abiding *memorials* of CHRIST and of his religion, and are of impregnable force against *unbelievers*, who presume either to call in question such plain *facts*, or to charge our most holy religion as an invention of men." Waterland's Charge *on the Doctrinal Use of the Christian Sacraments*, 8vo. 1736, p. 5. Leslie also, before Waterland, had laid great stress on this argument, which comprises the substance of his two last rules for judging of the evidences of Christianity; and he reproaches those who discard the ordinances of the Gospel, as taking part with its adversaries in depriving it of one of its most convincing proofs. "With the Deists," says he, "in this cause are joined the Quakers, and other of our Dissenters, who throw off the succession of our priesthood, (by which only it can be demonstrated) together with the Sacraments and public Festivals. And if the devil could have prevailed to have these dropt, the Christian religion would lose the most undeniable and demonstrative proof of the matter of fact of our Saviour, upon which the truth of his doctrine does depend. Therefore we may see the artifice and malice of the devil in all these attempts. And let those wretched instruments whom he ignorantly (and some by a misguided zeal) has deluded thus to undermine Christi-

anity, now at last look back, and see the snare in which they have been taken. For if they had prevailed, or ever should, Christianity dies with them; at least, it will be rendered precarious, as a thing of which no certain proof can be given. Therefore let those of them, who have any zeal for the truth, bless God that they have not prevailed, and quickly leave them; and let all others be aware of them. And let us consider the priesthood, sacraments, and other public institutions of Christ, not only as means of grace, and helps to devotion, but as the great evidences of the Christian religion." *Short Method with the Deists*, §. 19. See also his *Demonstr. of the Truth of Christianity*, §. 4. and his *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 13. This latter view of the subject is still further elucidated, and very ably drawn out, in Dr. Waterland's Charge above quoted.

P. 259. l. 24. *Socinianism.*] "Perniciosa cumprimis est hæresis Sociniana, quâ inter hodiernas, sub nomine Christiano, nulla æquè detestanda. Non enim hæc articulum aliquem religionis, sed ejus animam et fundamenta concutit, atque evertit fermè. Secundùm hanc, et Christus nihil est nisi Doctor aliquis, aut Martyr egregius; ejus officium, docere duntaxat, non verè redimere; Evangelium, altera lex; justificatio, propter opera; probitas, solummodo ethica; infernus, et animæ plurimorum post hanc vitam, nihil; quodque primo loco dicendum fuerat, S. in Deo Trinitas ludibrium et idolum. Quæ omnia, iisque annexa capita et errores, quantopere totam theologiam et religionem infestent ac corrumpant, nemo est qui non sentiat." Hoornbeck *Summa Controversiarum*, 12mo. 1653. lil. vii. p. 441. *de Socinianismo.* See also Mosheim, cent. xvi. sect. 3. part. 2. ch. iv. §. 15. 16. 17; and Leslie's *Socinian Controversy*, in six Dialogues, with the two Letters prefixed. Bp. Horsley, in his Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley (letter xvi. p. 264.) shews how nearly Socinianism is allied to *Deism*, and points out its tendency to confirm, rather than remove, the prejudices of Jews, Mahometans, and Infidels, against Christianity. It is remarkable (as the Bishop observes), that one of the earliest propagators of Socinianism in the Palatinate, Adam Newer, actually turned *Mahometan*. Basnage relates, that in the 16th century there sprung up a sect who disseminated, in Germany and Poland, opinions similar to those of the Socinians, which were considered at that time as more nearly allied to *Judaism* than to Christianity; whence the sect obtained the appellation of *Demi-Jews*. See his Hist. of the Jews, b. vii. c. xxx. §. 21.

SERMON IX.

P. 270. l. 22. *Hence seems to have arisen that modern species of infidelity, called deism, or natural religion.*] See Waterland's Second Charge, entitled, *Christianity vindicated against Infidelity*, 8vo. 1732. Leland's *View of Deistical Writers*, letter 1st; and Fabricii de Verit. Rel. Chr. cap. xxii.

P. 271. l. 16. *Lord Herbert of Cherbury.*] See Leland, as above, letters 1, 2. Mosheim, cent. xvii. sect. 1. §. 22; also Kortholt. *de tribus Impostoribus*, sect. 1. Hamburg. 4to. 1700. In this treatise, the principles of the three great deistical leaders, Herbert, Hobbes, and Spinosa, are thoroughly exposed; copious quotations are given from their writings; and the authors are exhibited in their true light as wilful deceivers. In my former edition, I have mentioned this as a *posthumous* work of Professor Kortholt, edited by his son. This, however, is a mistake. Fabricius mentions an edition, Kilone, 1689, 8vo. The edition here referred to was *republished* by his son, who gives this account of it:—"Luci nunc *iterum* expono, quem parens meus de tribus Impostoribus, conscripsit librum, qui *Herberti* occultam calliditatem, *Hobbii* tectas insidias, tacitasque *Spinosæ* inimicitias, ne cui sint fraudi, ante omnium oculos ponit. Noverat enim piè defunctus pater telum à tergo quàm in conspectu haberi magis periculosum, et majus esse malum cujus vim latentem minùs persentiscimus. Quocirca, ne impiorum Scriptorum lectores ignes ejusmodi fatuos per avia et præcipitia æveo impetu sequantur; pater solis vice matutini functus est, qui lumen suum orbi offert universo, licèt dormientibus inutile, at vigilantibus non sine commodo usurpandum."

P. 271. l. 23. *This author boasts of having discovered certain primary articles of religion*, &c.] "Ejus verò πρῶτον ψεῦδος in hoc est situm, quòd quinque sequentibus capitibus seu articulis concludi existimat quidquid ad universum pertinet religionis negotium: puta i. *esse supremum aliquod Numen*; ii. *coli id debere*; iii. *virtutem pietatemque esse præcipuas partes cultûs divini*; iv. *vitia et scelera quæcunque expiari debere ex pœnitentiâ*; v. *dari præmium et pœnam post hanc vitam*." Kortholt. ut suprà, p. 8.

P. 272. l. 6. *He pretends, that in establishing this system, he does not overturn Christianity, but strengthens and confirms it.*] "Accedit, quòd institutum suum princeps callidè dissimulat novus ille theologus, idque omni studio agit, ne malam causam prodat, neve ad avertendum Christianis-

mum et proscribendam omni ex parte Revelationem conatus suos tendere, lectori subolcat. Huc nimirum pertinet illa, solemnis ipsi, protestatio, (Coron. lib. de Causis Err. pag. 19.) *Tantum aberit, ut ex veritatibus Catholicis* (quinque ab Herberto assertis articulis) *aliquid ceræ decedat religioni, ut severa magisque* λογικὴ *inde succrescat* λατρεία. *Neque tandem vel fidei testimonia, vel ritus ceremoniæque decentiores* (*uti sæpe diximus*) *elevantur, sed omnibus in Deum collatis, tum internus tum externus stabilitur cultus.*" &c. vide Kortholt. ut suprà, p. 13, 14.

P. 272. l. 21. *the maxim, that universal consent is a necessary criterion of truth.*] "Libro de Veritate, pag. 51. *unicam*, inquit, *veritatis normam in necessariis facimus consensum istum universalem*, &c.]—Quòd si in necessariis consensus universalis unica est veritatis norma, adeóque tanquam vera, etiam in religionis negotio, non nisi illa debent admitti in quibus totus mundus conspirat, quid fiet, obsecro, de præcipuis Christianæ doctrinæ capitibus? Verum proinde non erit, in novâ Baronis nostri theologiâ, Christum esse Deum, esse natum ex virgine, rediisse ex sepulchro, ascendisse in cœlos, esse orbis Redemptorem: verum non erit, mundum hunc aliquando interiturum, mortuos resurrecturos, fore supremum judicium: vera non erunt tot alia fidei nostræ mysteria, tot sacræ historiæ, quæ partim ab infidelibus junctim omnibus, partim ab hâc vel illâ profanorum sectâ negantur pertinaciter, scurriliterque irridentur." Kortholt. ut supr. p. 16, 17.

Ibid. 273. l. 8. *that nothing can be admitted as true, which is not discoverable by our natural faculties.*] "Ejusdem porrò rationis est axioma illud *magnum* Herberto dictum, loco citato, p. 47. *Quod neque per instinctum naturalem, sensum internum, sensum externum, neque discursum innotescit, tanquam Verum propriè dictum nullo pacto probari potest.* Nam et hoc admisso, propriè vera non erunt primaria Christianismi dogmata, ut quæ *ὑπὲρ νοῦν, ὑπὲρ λόγον, καὶ ὑπὲρ κατάληψιν κτιστῆς φύσεως* posita, (ceu Justinus Martyr vel quisquis alius auctor *Expositionis Fidei* loquitur) nec instinctus naturalis, nec ullus sive externus sive internus sensus, nec acutissimi etiam intellectûs humani discursus valet assequi." Kortholt. ut supr. p. 17. "Amplius, unica Christianæ theologiæ basis est divina revelatio. Ideo videlicet immoto, omnemque deceptionis formidinem excludente, assensu, ut vera amplectimur Christianismi dogmata, quòd à Deo supernaturali ratione patefacta ea novimus. Hoc autem fidei nostræ fundamentum ut subvertat Herbertus, nulli profectò labori parcit. Tametsi enim, revelationem absolutè à se negari,

passim protestetur, ejus tamen certitudinem ultra illum, cui immediatè aliquid manifestatur divinitùs, nequaquam porrigi. iterum iterumque inculcat." Ibid. p. 19.

P. 274. l. 4. *that even inspired persons ought not to place any confidence in the divine communications which are made to them, unless,* &c.] "Si paulò attentiùs asserta ejus consideres, ne quidem ipsos Prophetas et Apostolos suis revelationibus citra deceptionis periculum fidere potuisse, omnino statuit. Eò nempe spectat quod absolutè ait, lib. de Verit. p. 288. *Cùm Revelationes falsæ esse possunt, ultra facultates ipsis in Revelationibus sapere, vix tutum arbitramur.* Etenim si *ultra facultates* in Revelationibus sapere vix tutum; hoc est, si ex rebus revelatis nihil ut indubitatò verum ampIecti licet, nisi quod sensuum pariter intellectûsve testimonio comprobatur, utique Revelationis in se spectatæ nulla erit certitudo, ne quidem respectu eorum quibus immediatè contingit." Ibid. p. 23.

Ibid. l. 17. *as deserving of no higher estimation than the Talmud,* &c.] Kortholt. ut suprà. p. 28. 29.

Ibid. l. 24. *he is evidently at a loss for a solid foundation, whereon to rest his theory.*] Many passages to this effect are quoted from his writings, in Kortholt's work, p. 31, 32. See also Leland, as above, letter ii. p. 20.

P. 275. l. 8. *in his mode of assailing Christianity, he is much indebted to its Pagan opponents, of old times.*] The parallel between the cavils of Lord Herbert against the Christian religion, and those of the Heathens, is fully drawn out, and illustrated by a variety of quotations from their respective works, by Kortholt, as above, p. 32—49.

P. 276. l. 11. *that he acts throughout the hypocrite and dissembler.*] "Ex hactenus allatis ὀφθαλμοφανερῶς patere arbitramur, protestationem esse facto prorsus contrariam, quando *imposturis* se in scriptis suis uti nolle, tam sanctè asseverat Herbertus, speciatim libro de Veritate, p. 95–141. An enim imponere non censendus ille, qui, cùm nihil non Scripturæ sacræ, tanquam θεόπνευστον et à Deo profectum, piè credi, eique idcircò *in omnibus, quæ olim gesta prædicantur fidem consummatam* haberi posse asseverat, unicè tamen id agit, ut incerta esse et suspecta, partim etiam absurda, fatua, perniciosa, quæcunque, præter quinque vi luminis naturalis cognitos articulos, ex Codice Biblico credit Ecclesia, universo orbi persuadeat? qui credulitatem toties Christianis objicit, ut certam veritatem talia amplectentibus? qui insanos proclamat summèque irrationales, quotquot mortem subire, quàm revelata illa dogmata missa facere, ducant satiùs? qui Mosi, Prophetis, Christo ipsi, omnibusque horum doctrinam sectantibus,

imposturas et fraudes impingere non dubitat? qui interitum Christianæ religionis optat et sperat? qui denique nihil prætermittit eorum, quæ unquam adversùs Christianismum professi ejus hostes moliti sunt, aut hodiè etiamnum moliuntur?" Kortholt. p. 49, 50.

P. 276. l. 24. *Hobbes.*] See Leland, letter iii. Mosheim, cent. xvii. sect. 1. §. 22. Kortholt. de Tribus Impost. sect. 2. Bruckeri Hist. Philos. per. iii. par. ii. l. 1. c. 6. Reimannus Hist. Atheor. sect. iii. cap. viii. §. 4. Buddeus de Atheism. et Superst. c. i. sect. 27.

Ibid. l. 24. *With the same views as his fellow-labourer, he pursued a very different plan.*] "Sicut φιλαυτίᾳ animique elatiore Herberto Hobbius non cedit, ita neque zelo evertendi religionem Christianam, ejusque fundamenta concutiendi. Quanquam non eodem modo ut ille, sed planè diversâ ratione impium illud negotium aggrediatur. Etenim quum *Herbertianæ* Theologiæ *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* sit, nihil ut certum indubitatòque verum in religionis causâ admitti oportere, nisi quod sensuum rationisque humanæ judicio, et universali omnium, qui quidem sanæ mentis sint, consensu comprobetur, *Hobbius* contrà, rationi et consensui tam parùm tribuens, ut ne quidem Deum esse ex naturæ lumine omnibus mortalibus constare, aut constare posse, palàm docuit (vide librum de Cive, cap. xiv. 19. in Annotat. et confer cap. xiv. 15. xvi. 1.) à potestatis civilis arbitrio religionis summam suspendit, et illo solo heic acquiescendum, cique rationem humanam absolutè submittendam esse disputat." Kortholt. ut suprà, p. 54.

P. 277. l. 7. *that obedience to man is the sole rule of belief and of practice.*] "Ante omnia notetur heic locus ex Leviathane, cap. 33. *Quatenus*, ait, *non differunt Scripturæ à legibus naturæ, dubium non est, quin sint leges Dei, auctoritatemque habent omnibus qui ratione naturali prædìti sunt manifestam. Sed authoritas hæc alia non est, quàm quæ doctrinæ omni morali, si vera sit, attribuenda est. Si leges à Deo ipso factæ sint, nempe leges divinæ positivæ, nullâ accedente authoritate humanâ, illis solis leges sunt, quibus Deus ipsas ita promulgavit, ut nulla illis per ignorantiam relinquatur excusatio. Illi igitur, quibus Deus non revelavit supernaturaliter, quòd Scripturæ ab illo sint, vel eos qui illas prædicant ab eo missos esse, nullâ ut eas recipiant authoritate obligantur, præterquam ejus qui summam habet in civitate potestatem. Is enim Legislator solus est.*" Kortholt. p. 55.

P. 278. l. 8. *as in the system of Herbert, so in that of Hobbes, we may discern much that seems to be derived from the principles of Pagan philosophers.*] See Kortholt, p. 61—65.

P. 280. l. 22. *The apostate Jew, Spinosa.*] See Kortholt.

de Tribus Impost. sect. 3. Colerus, Vie de Spinosa, à la Haye, 12mo. 1706. Bruckeri, Hist. Philos. per. iii. part ii. l. 2. c. 3. Philippi Hist. Atheismi, cap. 10. Buddei, de Atheism. et Superst. c. i. §. 26. Buddei, Elem. Philos. tom. ii. part vi. cap. 5. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. xvii. sect. 1. §. 24. Fabricius de Verit. Rel. Chr. c. 13. where there is a copious list of writers who combated Spinosa's pernicious tenets.

P. 281. l. 8. *Prophecy he regards as merely the effusions of melancholy or fanatical men.*] See Cuperi Arcana Atheismi, l. i. c. 1—3. Kortholt, ut suprà, p. 83. Colerus, Vie de Spinosa, p. 104.

Ibid. l. 17. *The whole of the sacred code being excluded*, &c.] Concerning Spinosa's rejection of the Scriptures as the word of God, see Cuperi Arcan. Ath. as above, cap. 8—12.

P. 282. l. 12. *even to a virtual denial of God.*] "Autant que j'ai pû comprendre les sentimens de Spinosa, voici sur quoi roule la dispute qu'il y a entre nous qui sommes Chrétiens et lui : sçavoir, si le Dieu véritable est une substance éternelle, différente et distincte de l'univers et de toute la nature ; et si par un acte de volonté entièrement libre il a tiré du néant le monde et toutes les créatures ; ou si l'univers et toutes les êtres qu'il renferme appartiennent essentiellement à la nature de Dieu, considéré comme une substance dont la pensée et l'étendue sont infinies. C'est cette dernière proposition que Spinosa soutient. Ainsi il avoue bien que Dieu est la cause généralement de toutes choses ; mais il prétend que Dieu les a produit nécessairement, sans liberté, sans choix, et sans consulter son bon plaisir. Pareillement tout ce qui arrive au monde, bien ou mal, vertu ou crime, pèche ou bonnes œuvres, part de lui nécessairement, et par conséquent il ne doit y avoir ni jugement, ni punition, ni résurrection, ni salut, ni damnation. Car autrement ce Dieu imaginaire puniroit et recompenseroit son propre ouvrage, comme un enfant fait sa poupée. N'est-ce pas là le plus pernicieux Athéisme qui ait jamais paru au monde ? C'est aussi ce qui donne occasion à Mr. Burmanus, Ministre des Réformés à Enkhuise, de nommer à juste titre *Spinosa* le plus impie Athée qui ait jamais vû le jour." Colerus, Vie de Spinosa, p. 123. See also Kortholt, p. 92—98.

Ibid. l. 23. *He inveighs against those who acknowledge any Creator of the world.*] Kortholt, p. 96.

Ibid. l. 28. *he denies a Providence, scoffs at the doctrine of heaven, of hell, and of evil spirits*, &c.] Kortholt, p. 99.

P. 283. l. 5. *His opinions he undertakes to vindicate, as by no means hostile to religion or virtue.*] "Estque tanta

viri hujus, confidentia dicam, an impudentia? ut Tractatum suum Theologico-Politicum, quem Atheismi (strictissimè sic dicti) synopsin seu compendium optimo jure nuncupaveris, istis concludere verbis non dubitet: *His quæ in hoc tractatu agere constitueram absolvi. Superest expressè monere, me nihil in eo scripsisse, quod non libentissimè examini et judicio summarum potestatum patriæ meæ subjiciam. Nam si quid horum, quæ dixi, patriis legibus repugnare, vel communi saluti obesse judicabunt, id ego indictum volo. Scio me hominem esse, et errare potuisse; ne autem errarem, sedulò curavi, et apprimè, ut quidquid scriberem, legibus patriæ, pietati, bonisque moribus omnino responderet.*" Kortholt. p. 79.

P. 283. l. 8. *He pretends to consider the love of God as the chief duty, and the chief good, of man.*] "Vide autem, in illo, quàm sit subdolus, quòd, singularem præ se ferens pietatem, Deum summum bonum agnoscendum esse dicit, eundemque, ut talem, amandum! Nempe quum Deus nihil aliud ei sit quàm Natura, sive hæc rerum universitas, eo ipso quòd Deum pro summo bono agnoscendum, eundemque amandum esse ait, summum bonum in cognitione et amore hujus mundi, sive rerum naturalium, constituit. Quam interpretationem nec ipsemet alibi dissimulare potest." Kortholt. p. 100. See also Cuperi Arcan. Ath. l. i. c. iv. p. 45. Respecting the gross inconsistency of Spinosa, in representing *virtue* and *repentance* as necessary to salvation, see some excellent observations by Kortholt, as above, p. 101—103.

P. 284. l. 1. *which he maintains to be only binding when enjoined by the civil power,* &c.] See Kortholt, p. 103—105. 111.

Ibid. l. 9. *declaring his general disbelief of its principal facts, as well as its doctrines.*] "Quum urgeret Oldenburgius, ut quam teneret de Christo sententiam clariùs profiteretur Spinosa, amico tanto gratificaturus, hanc tandem confessionem ille edidit: resurrectionem et ascensionem Christi, si historicè et secundùm literam accipiantur, nequaquam à se agnosci. Videantur epistolæ 23 et 24." Kortholt. p. 108. et seq.

Ibid. l. 19. *who, after all, has scarcely advanced any opinions, which were not maintained by some of his precursors in the cause of infidelity.*] "Fuisse ante Spinozam qui in eo quod caput causæ est cum eo consenserunt, omnes scilicet illi qui non alium quàm naturam ipsam, seu hoc universum, agnoverunt Deum, quive ideò hodie pantheistarum nomine à quibusdam insigniuntur, tum ex hactenùs dictis constat, tum ex instituto à me in *Dissert. de Spinozismo ante Spinozam*, demonstratum est. Primus tamen Spinoza

fuit, qui in systematis formam hanc impietatem summo studio redigeret, eique methodum geometricam, infelici tamen successu, aptaret. Unde et haud immeritò hæcce atheismi species nomen ab eo sortita est, atque *Spinozismus* adpellatur." Buddeus de Atheismo et Superstitione, c. i. sect. 26. The treatise of Buddeus, *de Spinozismo ante Spinozam*, I have never seen; but in his work above quoted (c. i. sect. 6—9.) are pointed out several traces of that atheism which Spinoza embraced, in the philosophy of the ancients, and particularly in the Jewish Cabalistic philosophy, with which Spinoza was, doubtless, well acquainted. See also Buddei Elem. Philos. tom. ii. c. 5. entitled, *Spinozismus profligatus*; and Brucker, as above, per. iii. part. ii. l. c. iii. sect. 4. Colerus mentions, however, that Spinoza imbibed his atheistical opinions from Francis Van Den Ende, a physician of Amsterdam.

P. 285. l. 5. *These three great impostors.*] They are thus called by the learned Professor Kortholt, in the work above referred to, *de Tribus Impostoribus magnis*; in the preface to which he thus characterizes them: "Viri callidi, et technarum pleni. Qui dum singularem veritatis amorem in editis à se commentariis præferunt, id agunt unicè, ut omni religioni tollendæ viam parent, ipsumque Christianismum evertant penitùs, imposturas ubique crepantes et impostores, quando de religione revelatâ ejusque propagatoribus sermo est. Ceterùm ut olim obtrectatoribus Ethnicis, imposturas Christianismo objicientibus, reponebat Origenes, (lib. 6. contra Celsum,) ipsos impostores esse omnium maximos: ad eundem modum et nos in novos illos Philosophos hanc facem retorquemus, fraudumque eos et imposturarum postulamus." Procem. p. 4.

P. 286. l. ult. *Vanini.*] See La Vie de Vanini, par Durand, Rotterdam, 12mo. 1717. Buddei de Ath. et Superst. c. i. §. 21. Reimanni Hist. Atheor. sect. 3. cap. iv. §. 13. Kortholti Eccl. Hist. sæc. xvii. p. 867. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. 17. sect. i. §. 23.

P. 287. l. 16. *Christianity suffered additional injury from the new sect of Sceptics.*] "Differt in haud paucis Scepticismus recentiorum à Pyrrhonismo veterum, et novum ingeniorum remedium nostrâ demum ætate inventum videri voluit, cùm nimis crassam Pyrrhonis schola larvam vero vultui præfixisset. Et pauci quidem inventi sunt, qui universalem quendam Scepticismum tuentes omnes humano intellectui vires denegarunt, variis, ad eam humanæ mentis ignominiam asserendam, causis ducti, inter quos eminent Vaverius, Hernhaymius, Foucherius, Huetius, qui Pyrrhonicorum tela revocarunt et in aciem deduxerunt. Quidam

infinita contra quascunque assertiones dubia nectendo, et insuperabiles ubique nodos etiam in scirpo quærendo reipsâ fulcra Scepticismo validissima pararunt, in quo ludo Scholastici plerique etiam recentiores hærent, et inter hos Arriaga, quam verò dubitandi artem ad apicem deduxit Petrus Bayle. Alii paulò prudentiores dubitatione scepticâ ad evertendam philosophiam hypotheticam et refræanandam dogmaticorum arrogantiam usi sunt. Pauci quidam viri docti Scepticismum, in tantâ humanæ mentis angustiâ, velut medicinam quandam adversùs ambitionem ejus, *πανσοφίαν* quandam præ se ferentem, adhibuerunt, ejusque auxilio sectæ præjudicia et errores ejecerunt, providèque limites posuerunt, quibus constaret quæ seire possint, quæ lateant, et detegenda sint in quibus explorandis frustrà consumatur labor: qui cùm omnium præclarissimè dubitationem in partes vocaverint, ex hoc numero meritò excludendi sunt. Plerique in scientiis tantùm specialibus philosophiæ, maximè naturali, incertitudinis rationem secuti sunt. Omnium pessimè illi meruerunt, qui Scepticismi ariete convellere muros Sionis detestabili impietate sunt conati." Bruckeri Hist. Philos. per. iii. part. 1. l. 3. c. i. §. 3. See also Reimanni Hist. Ath. sect. ii. cap. 31. Buddei Elem. Philos. tom. i. c. 1. §. 10—13. Ogilvie on Scepticism and Infidelity, sect. ix. p. 327. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. xvii. sect. i. §. 37.

P. 290. l. 13. *The growth of Deism in our own country, under the usurpation of Cromwell.*] "Amotâ Hierarchiâ, subitò ingens Hæreticorum numerus, ut locustæ Ecclesias Anglicanas obruerunt, Familistæ, Anabaptistæ, Donatistæ, Antinomi, Independentes, Arminiani, Sabbatarii, Anti-Sabbatarii, Traskitæ, Millenarii, Hetheringtonii, Sociniani, Ariani, Atheistæ. Gisb. etiam Voetius, (tom. i. p. 1151, &c.) de Atheismo Anglorum agit: notatque Antihierarchicos Episcopali Hierarchiæ occasionem et originem Atheismi imputâsse." Reimanni Hist. Ath. sect. 3. cap. viii. §. 1. p. 438. See also Mosheim, cent. 17. sect. ii. part. 2. ch. ii. §. 22. where he refers to Neale's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. iv. p. 87.

P. 292. l. 10. *Many also were the champions in foreign countries.*] See a copious list of those who thus "contended for the Faith," in the learned Fabricius's work, De Verit. Christ. Rel. particularly in ch. xxx. The German and Dutch Universities produced, in the 17th century, many works in defence of Christianity, now little known, but of extraordinary merit.

Ibid. l. 22. *Great exertions were made to carry the glad tidings of the Gospel into distant countries.*] Societas de

propaganda Fide; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts: the Danish and other Missions to the East Indies, &c. were instituted about this period. See Mosheim, cent. xvii. sect. 1.

SERMON X.

P. 297. l. 21. *the aids of sound literature and solid argument were brought, with alacrity, in defence of the Christian faith.*] Among the writers who particularly distinguished themselves in this country, at the beginning of the 18th century, were the honourable Robert Boyle, in his various theological and philosophical works, Dr. Samuel Parker, Dr. Henry More, Dr. Ralph Cudworth, Dr. Nehemiah Grew, Dr. William Nichols, Dr. Bentley, Dr. S. Clarke, Mr. John Ray, and Dr. Cheyne.

P. 298. note. *Blount.*] See Leland's Deistical Writers, letter 4. Mosheim, cent. xvii. sect. i. §. 22. Leslie's Preface to his Short Method with the Deists, 4th edition. Reimanni Hist. Ath. sect. iii. c. viii. §. 7. Several writers controverted this author's mischievous productions; particularly Dr. Nichols, in his excellent work, entitled, *A Conference with a Theist.*

P. 299. note. *Toland.*] Buddeus says of Toland, "an crassiori aut apertiori quâdam ratione unquam aliquis inter Christianos atheismum suum prodiderit, quàm Joannes Tolandus, gente Anglus, et ob impietatem hodiè notissimus, valdè dubito." De Ath. et Superst. c. 1. §. 27. p. 194. See also Reiman. ut suprà, sect. 3. c. viii. §. 15. Leland, letter 4. Mosheim. cent. xvii. sect. i. §. 22, 23. Toland's writings called forth many able opponents, in this and in other countries. See Fabricius de Verit. Rel. Chr. c. xxii. p. 480, 481. Abp. Synge, Bp. Brown, Mr. John Norris, Dr. Mangey, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Jer. Jones, Mr. Steph. Nye, and others, attacked his several publications with great success.

Ibid. note. *Shaftesbury.*] See Leland, letters 5, 6. and Mosheim, as above. Lord Shaftesbury's great work was distinctly answered by Dr. Brown, in his *Essays on the Characteristics.* Bp. Berkeley, Bp. Warburton, and Mr. Balguy, also animadverted on some parts of his writings.

P. 300. note. *Tindal.*] See Leland, letter 9. and Mosheim, cent. xviii. §. 6. Tindal's book, entitled, "*Christianity as old as the Creation,*" gave occasion to many valuable treatises by Bp. Gibson, Bp. Conceybeare, Dr. T. Burnet, Dr. Waterland, Mr. Law, Dr. Stebbing, Mr. Balguy, and Dr. Leland himself. See Leland, as above.

P. 300. note. *Morgan.*] See Mosheim, as above; and Leland, letter 10. Dr. Chapman's *Eusebius*, Mr. Lowman's *Dissertation on the Civil Government of the Hebrews*, and Dr. Chandler's *Vindication of the Old Testament*, were written in answer to Morgan's writings.

P. 301. note. *Chubb.*] See Mosheim, as above; and Leland, letters 13, 14. in which this author's writings are enlarged upon at considerable length, no other answer having then been given to his books.

P. 302. note. *Collins.*] See Leland, letter 7; and Mosheim, cent. xviii. §. 5. Dr. Bentley's admirable work, entitled, *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, was published in answer to this author's *Discourse of Free-thinking*. His other works, the *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, and the *Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered*, were ably refuted by Bp. Chandler, Bp. Sherlock, Dr. Bullock, Dr. Rogers, Mr. Lowman, and others.

P. 303. note. *Woolston.*] "A man," says Dr. Mosheim, "of inauspicious genius, who made the most audacious, though senseless attempts, to invalidate the miracles of Christ." See as above, cent. xviii. sect. 5. also Leland, letter 8. Bp. Gibson, Bp Pearce, Bp. Smallbrook, Bp. Sherlock, Dr. Lardner, and other distinguished writers, refuted the very offensive productions of this strange, infatuated man.

P. 304. l. 25. *several anonymous libellers.*] An account of the works here referred to, and of the principal answers which were made to them, may be found in Leland, as above, letters 11, 12, 15.

P. 305. l. 6. *Bolingbroke.*] See Leland, letters 22—34, in which Lord Bolingbroke's various attacks on the Sacred Scriptures, and on the fundamental principles of Revealed Religion, are considered at large.

P. 310. l. 18. *Hume.*] See Leland, letters 16—21, where Hume's whole system is ably examined and refuted. His sophistry was also fully exposed in Bp. Douglas's *Criterion, or Miracles examined;* in Bp. Horne's *Letters on Infidelity*, and *his Letter to Dr. Adam Smith;* in Dr. Beattie's *Essay on the Immutability of Truth;* Dr. Adams's *Essay on Miracles;* and Dr. Campbell's *Dissertation on Miracles.*

P. 317. l. 1. *the late celebrated historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*] Mr Davis, in the Introduction to his Examination of Mr. Gibbon's History, says, that "often, on examining his references, when they are to be traced, we shall find him supporting his cause by *manifest falsification*, and perpetually assuming to himself the strange privilege of inserting in his text what the writers referred to give him no right to advance on their authority." This

charge Mr. D. endeavours to make good, by selecting from Mr. G.'s work many egregious instances of misrepresentation. Mr. G. is indignant (as might be expected) at the charge, and parries, with much dexterity, the attacks of his antagonist. But an impartial reader, after carefully examining the passages in question, will hardly fail to think that the historian, although he has successfully vindicated *some* of them, has but feebly defended several of the most important, and has totally passed over *others* which materially affect the credit of his narrative. Bp. Watson, in his *Apology for Christianity*, has also specified several instances, in which Mr. Gibbon has shewn a most culpable disregard to truth, or, at least, a very disingenuous endeavour to mislead his readers by distorting the facts, or colouring the circumstances of his narrative. In an *Appendix* to Bp. Watson's Apology, are some excellent remarks, to the same effect, on Mr. Gibbon's endeavours to explain away some parts of the conduct of Nero, Trajan, and Pliny, towards the primitive Christians. See also Dr. Chelsum's Remarks, Dr. Apthorp's *Letters on the Prevalence of Christianity before it's civil Establishment*, p. 194—235; and Mr. Kett's Bampt. Lect. serm. 5. and notes, p. 21—32.

P. 319. note. *Lord Chesterfield.*] "Chesterfield," (says Dr. Apthorp, in his *Letters on Christianity*, p. 5.) "leaving the debate about principles to the metaphysics of his noble predecessor, (Ld. Bolingbroke,) has availed himself of equal eloquence to subvert our morals. His popular letters are a complete example of human corruption, veiling itself under the decent exterior of false virtue, false science, and accomplishments equally brilliant and deceitful."

P. 320. l. 4. *Frederic the Second, King of Prussia.*] The Abbé Denina, who has written the life of Frederic, evidently with a strong bias in favour of the subject of his memoirs, informs us, that at an early period of his life, he commenced a correspondence with the celebrated men of his time; that he formed an intimacy with none but Frenchmen, or Germans who were partial to French literature; and that *Bayle's Dictionary* was his favourite study. The Abbé gives us also to understand, that Frederic's studies were in general of a light and superficial cast; whence he accounts for his preference of French to German literature, and even apologizes for it with much simplicity. "En Allemagne," says he, "les auteurs *qui pouvoient plaire à un prince qui avoit de l'esprit*, et le gout formé par les premières études, étoient aussi rares. Un *professeur*, et un *auteur qui plaît*, un livre *élementaire* ou *érudit*, et un ouvrage *agréable, sont des choses fort différentes*; cet esprit

d'exactitude, et des *citations* continuelles qui regnent dans le premier, sont un *obstacle* à la composition *aisée* qui *engage* et *attache* le lecteur." Vie de Frederic II. p. 27. Again;—"la plupart des auteurs Allemands étoient des jurisconsultes, des théologiens, des philosophes, qui écrivoient *en Latin*. Pouvoit-on prétendre qu'un prince destiné au gouvernement d'un grand état militaire par nécessité, allât se perdre dans le labyrinthe du droit Germanique, et dans les subtilités des glossateurs? Il auroit pourtant lu au moins quelques-uns de ces écrivains; mais *on avoit negligé de lui faire étudier le Latin*; parceque dans le temps de son éducation le François avoit déjà pris le dessus, et que l'Anglois commençoit à être à la mode. L'Italien l'étoit encore; et on ne jugea peut-être pas à propos de *l'ennuyer par l'étude des langues anciennes*." Ibid. p. 30. *Voltaire*, it is added, gave him a distaste for studies of this kind. "Il disoit lui-même, que c'étoit *ce bel esprit* François, qui lui avoit fait perdre le goût qu'il avoit pour la philosophie." Ibid. p. 34. With such an education, and with the impressions made so early on his mind by French *beaux esprits*, we are not much to wonder at Frederic's subsequent enmity to Revealed Religion, which he ever afterwards pursued with the most systematic and unremitting hostility. See Denina, as above, part. i. ch. 23, 24. and part. ii. ch. 17. §. 7. Frederic's anti-religious sentiments are moreover abundantly manifested in the voluminous correspondence between him and his literary associates, published since his death.

SERMON XI.

P. 326. l. 1. *What the sacred writers intend by "the last days."*] Bp. Hurd observes, concerning the scriptural division of time into two great portions, the *former* and the *latter* times, "by the *former*, is meant the times preceding the Christian æra; by the *latter*, the times subsequent to it. Correspondent to this division of time, is the double advent of Christ. His *first* advent was, when he came in the flesh at Jerusalem: his *second* advent is to be understood of his coming in his kingdom, through all ages of the Christian Church. But though the *latter times*, in the general sense of Scripture, be thus comprehensive, they are further subdivided into other constituent portions, in which some particular state of Christ's kingdom is administered, and within which it is completed. In reference to this subordinate division of time in the

Christian dispensation, the coming of Christ is also proportionably multiplied. He *comes* in each division; that is, as oft as he thinks fit to interpose by any signal act of his power and providence. The whole period in which any distinct state of his kingdom is carrying on, is likewise called the *latter time*; and the concluding part of that period is distinguished by the name of the *last hour*: as if the whole of each period were considered as *one day*: and the close of each period as the end, or *last hour*, of that day. Thus, the time that elapsed from Christ's ascension to the destruction of Jesusalem, being one of the subdivisions before-mentioned, is called the *latter times*; and the eve of its destruction is called the *last hour*. He *was coming* through the whole time: he *came* in the end of it. And the like use of these terms is to be made in other instances. We are to apply them in the same manner to the *reign of Antichrist*, to *the Millennium*, to the *day of judgment*. Each of these states, into which the *latter times*, or the times of Christianity are divided, is likewise spoken of under the idea of the *latter times*; and the season in which each is drawing to an end, is the *last hour* of that state." Hurd's Warburt. Lect. serm. 7. p. 211. See also Mede's Works, b. iii. ch. 11, 12, 13. Cocceii Comment. in loc. Op. tom. v. Hammond's sermon on 2 Peter iii. 3. in his Works, fol. vol. iv. p. 670. Kett on Prophecy, vol. ii. p. 122, 1st edit. Worthington's Boyle's Lect. vol. ii. disc. 18.

P. 332. note. *Barruel and Robison.*] The Abbé Barruel's *Hist. of Jacobinism*, and Professor Robison's *Proofs of a conspiracy against Religion*, contain such a mass of well-authenticated evidence respecting the associations on the Continent for the overthrow of Christianity, as can hardly leave a doubt respecting *the general facts*, whatever apprehension may arise that in *the detail of the circumstances* some inaccuracies may have occurred. Great pains have, however, been taken to shake the credit of both these valuable works. Among others, M. Mounier, one of the best intentioned and ablest of the French Revolutionists, has elaborately endeavoured to vindicate, not only himself, but the whole fraternity of French and German philosophers, from the charge of conspiracy against the Christian religion. So far as Mr. M. himself is *personally* concerned, his vindication may be considered as completely satisfactory. But upon an attentive consideration of his work, entitled, *On the Influence attributed to Philosophers, Free-Masons, and to the Illuminati, on the Revolution of France*, translated by J. Walker, A. M. 8vo. 1801; I

cannot perceive that he has shaken the credit of either the Abbé Barruel or Professor Robison, in any points of material importance.

P. 343. l. 11. *a distinguished Divine of the Romish Church.*] See Geddes's *Preface* to the 2nd vol. of his Translation of the Bible, and the 1st vol. of his *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures.* In the Monthly Review for August 1803, this last work is highly extolled by the Reviewer, who speaks with admiration of Dr. G. as an able and *intrepid* theologian, and stigmatizes a belief in the *Inspiration* of the Jewish Scriptures as "*superstitious reverence!*"

P. 347. l. 6. *It has long since been more than suspected, that among the professors of Mahometanism, there was a considerable number who had imbibed atheistic notions.*] "Nec hodie Mahumedismus Atheismi est expers. Illi qui inter Turcas Atheismum profitentur, Musarini nominari gestiunt, id est, qui habent penès se verum secretum, cujus secreti summa huc redit, Deum nullum agnoscere, atque constanter affirmare principium internum aliquod cujusque individui cursum omnium rerum dirigere atque motum. Solem, lunam, astra cetera inde habere originem atque motum, neque hominis dissimilem esse rationem, pullulare enim, crescere, virere, denique marcescere, non secùs atque herbæ cæterique flores. Mirum et incredibile dictu quantus eorum numerus sit Byzantii, qui hanc fovent opinionem, quorum maxima pars in scriptis Arabum versatissima et dignitate Cadisii seu judicis, reliqui sunt Christiani profugi et Apostatæ, qui, conscientiæ morsibus et exprobrationibus exagitati propter renunciationis scelera, nihil magis volunt quàm ut cum hoc mundo spectabili omnia finiantur. Hæc Ricautius. Franciscus Ferdinandus à Troilo, (in Itinerario Orientali, p. 853,) Eos, inquit, qui è Christianis Turcæ facti sunt, Gallos præcipuè, Hispanos, et Siculos, Algiriæ commorantes, ut plurimum esse atheos practicos." Reimanni Hist. Ath. sect. 4. §. 12. *De Atheismo Muhammedanorum;* where is given a brief history of the progress of atheism from the time of Mahomet to the present day, verified by a great variety of authorities cited in proof of the fact.

P. 349. l. 17. *many were the productions of the Gallican clergy.*] Among other valuable writers in France, who, during the last century, withstood, with great zeal and ability, the unceasing efforts of infidels to bring religion into contempt, the following deserve particular attention: Abbadie, *de la Verité de la Relig. Chrétienne;* Houtteville, *La Rel. Chr. prouvée par les Faits; Lettres de quelques*

Juifs à M. de Voltaire. The Abbé Barruel, in his History of Jacobinism, enumerates many more; viz. *Lettres Helviennes; Déisme refutée*, par l'Abbé Bergier; *Les Erreurs de Voltaire*, &c.

SERMON XII.

P. 358. l. 9. *On this point the Holy Scriptures are clear and explicit.*] "That there are angels and spirits, good and bad; that, at the head of these last, there is ONE, more considerable and malignant than the rest, who in the form, or under the name, of a *serpent*, was deeply concerned in the fall of man, and whose *head*, as the prophetic language is, the Son of man was one day to *bruise*; that this evil spirit, though that prophecy be in part complete, has not yet received his death's wound, but is still permitted, for ends unsearchable to us, and in ways which we cannot particularly explain, to have a certain degree of power in this world, hostile to it's virtue and happiness, and sometimes exerted with too much success; all this is so clear from Scripture, that no believer, unless he be first of all *spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit*, can possibly entertain a doubt of it." Bishop Hurd's Sermon on James iv. 7. vol. iii. serm. 13, a discourse, which well deserves the serious consideration of all who, through the influence of false philosophy, may be inclined to reject this important doctrine. See also Gray's Discourses, p. 68, and Nares's Discourses, p. 73.

P. 367. l. 27. *No other religion has pretensions so ancient.*] See Jenkins on the Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. i. p. 335, 392.

P. 372. l. 17. *But this doctrine, rightly understood, is widely different from that of Manicheism.*] See Bp. Hurd's Serm. as above, p. 232—237. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. b. iii. ch. iii. §. 8, 9, 10. Kortholti Hist. Eccl. sæc. iii. p. 82—86. Mornæi de Verit. Chr. Rel. c. ii. p. 23. and c. xvii. p. 282. De Voisin, Theol. Jud. l. ii. c. 4. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. cent. iii. part. ii. ch. 5. §. 3—10.

P. 377. l. 10. *The things yet to come.*] As I do not profess to have bestowed minute attention on this part of my subject (nor indeed was it necessary to my purpose to give more than a very general outline of what relates to it) I must refer the reader to the many excellent writers who have made these things the direct object of their study; a study, in which several able Divines of the present day are deeply engaged. It is impossible, indeed, not to feel an increasing interest in researches of this kind, when we

contemplate the fearful events which are continually taking place, and the manifest indications of some great purpose to which the Almighty is now directing the course of human affairs. Great caution, however, is requisite, in the application of prophecy to events not yet fully accomplished; since much injury may unintentionally be done to the cause of Christianity, by crude and injudicious speculations on so difficult a subject. It is an important observation of Bp. Hallifax, concerning the Apocalypse in particular, that "our business is, not to prophesy, but to interpret; not to foretell things before they are fulfilled, but, after they are fulfilled, to illustrate the prediction from the event." Had this rule been more generally attended to, much perplexity might perhaps have been avoided, in the discussion of the prophecies contained in this and other books of Holy Writ.

P. 377. l. 21. *The reign of Antichrist.*] See Mede's Works, b. iii. sect. iii. ch. 10. and sect. v. ch. 11, 12, 13. b. iv. epistle 71, 72, 73, 95. Also Sir Isaac Newton on the Apocalypse. Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 387—396. Worthington's B. Lect. disc. 17, 18. Kett on Prophecy, class ii. ch. 1.

Ibid. l. 16. *The witnesses.*] See Mede's Works, p. 480. 758, 759. Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 232—239. Worthington's B. Lect. disc. 19.

P. 379. l. 25. *The conversion of the Jews.*] See Mede's Works, p. 758, 759, 765, 891. Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 394. Worthington's B. L. disc. 14. p. 52—65. Churton's Bampt. Lect. serm. 7. Nares's Warb. Lect. serm. 12. Croft's Bampt. Lect. p. 203. Hall's Bampt. Lect. p. 270.

P. 381. l. 24. *the Millennium.*] See Mede's Works, p. 530, 571, 602, 759, 770, 892, 897. Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 396. Nares's Warb. Lect. serm. 12. Gray's Discourses, serm. 10.

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